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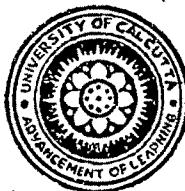
# THE CALCUTTA JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES



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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

## THE CALCUTTA JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

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CONTENTS

Mira Ganguly & Bangendu Ganguly	Marxism and Political Inquiry	1
Tapan Kumar Chattopadhyay	Marx's Concept of Man : From Essentialist Anthropology to Historical Materialism	18
Debesh Roychowdhury	Althusser's Marxism	58
Dipak Kumar Das	Marxism and the National Question ; Some Observations	102

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*Editor's Note*

The editor regrets the inordinate delay in the publication of this volume. This delay has been caused by circumstances beyond the control of the editorial board. The editorial board had decided that this volume would be a special issue on marxism and politics. The board desires to thank all those who have been kind enough to contribute articles on this theme. Only a few of these articles have been included in this volume. The other articles will be included in the next issue which is now in the press. The editor expresses his sincere apologies to the learned authors whose papers could not be included in the present volume.

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## MARXISM AND POLITICAL INQUIRY

MIRA GANGULY

and

BANGENDU GANGULY

ALL KNOWN HISTORY is the record of man's struggle for freedom. Many of these struggles have indeed widened the horizons of his life while others have ended in failure. One of the reasons that have contributed to these failures is a lack of knowledge of the circumstances. For achieving success, man has to know the reality. He has to look at the problems at hand and to assess the existing conditions. At every stage of the movement for the ultimate freedom of the human being, a proper assessment of the material conditions and the attitudinal dimensions of the people is essential. Marxists believe that "in doing a thing, if one does not understand its circumstances, its characteristics and its relations to other things, then one cannot know its laws, cannot know how to do it, and cannot do it well."<sup>1</sup> As Lenin puts it, "the very gist, the living soul, of Marxism" is "a concrete analysis of a concrete situation."<sup>2</sup>

Stressing the significance of the proletarian revolution as an act of universal emancipation which makes man "his own master—free", Engels pointed out that "the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement" was "to thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions...to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish."<sup>3</sup>

The direct task of science, according to Marx, was to provide a true slogan of struggle and, in the opinion of Lenin, this could not be done "unless we study every stage of the struggle during the

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transition from one form to another, so that we can define the situation at any given moment, without losing sight of the general character of the struggle....”<sup>4</sup> No revolutionary activity, in fact, can proceed without a general analysis of the economic status of the various classes in the society and of their respective attitudes towards the revolution. A revolutionary party must identify its enemies as well as its friends. To distinguish real friends from real enemies the actual political scene must be probed. In a revolutionary war correct decisions depend on correct judgments which ensue from a comprehensive and indispensable reconnaissance and a systematic deliberation on the various data gathered through such reconnaissance.<sup>5</sup> While outlining the problems of China’s revolutionary war Mao Tsetung pointed out in 1933 that the method to be employed in learning and in applying that learning was “to familiarise ourselves with all aspects of the enemy’s situation as well as our own, to discover the laws of the actions of both sides, and to take these laws into account in our own actions.”<sup>6</sup>

Political inquiry thus forms an indispensable part of marxism and its application. The guidelines for a scientific mode of political inquiry were initially laid down by Marx and Engels and further developed by their followers. Following these guidelines, a marxist researcher would be interested in interpreting political data not only for the sake of gaining knowledge, but also for the sake of transforming the society. Marxism not only explains how the world is organized and in accordance with what law it develops. It helps people to change it. It is a guide to action. In his *Theses on Feuerbach* Marx wrote : “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways ; the point, however, is to *change it.*”<sup>7</sup>

One must realize, however, that a political inquiry is called for not only in conditions leading to a revolution but even after the successful completion of a revolution. Some might say that political inquiry in the post-revolution era is even more important than that in the pre-revolution period. Even a novice would realize that for a marxist researcher the basis of any inquiry—whether carried out prior to the revolution or after it—would be the dialectical method.

What Marx and Engels called the dialectical method...is nothing else than the scientific method in sociology, which consists in

regarding society as a living organism in a state of constant development...an organism the study of which requires an objective analysis of the production relations that constitute the given social formation and an investigation of its laws of functioning and development.<sup>8</sup>

Marx's theory was to investigate and explain the evolution of the economic system of certain countries and Lenin held that its "application" to Russia could "be only the. INVESTIGATION of Russian production relations and their evolution, EMPLOYING the established practices of the MATERIALIST method and of THEORETICAL political economy." The elaboration of this new theory of methodology and political economy marked a gigantic progress in social science, a tremendous advance for socialism.<sup>9</sup>

For the first time in human history Marxism-Leninism made it possible to disclose in a complete manner the dialectics of the genesis and development of complex social systems, having thereby laid down the foundation of scientific systems analysis. The marxists examine a system not in a static condition, but in a state of flux and in interaction with other systems. Marx applied his systems analysis to investigate the capitalist society, its economic structure and the superstructure. According to Marx political economy became a systematic science only when it reached not a fragmentary, but an integral logical reproduction of the system of production relations in a given society. Thereby it helped humanity to carry out its "highest task" of comprehending the objective logic of the evolution of social life in its general and fundamental features, "so that it may be possible to adapt *to it* one's social consciousness and the consciousness of the advanced classes of all capitalist countries in as definite, clear and critical a fashion as possible."<sup>10</sup>

The premises from which marxist political inquiry begins are not arbitrary ones, or dogmas. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. "These premises can...be verified in a purely empirical way."<sup>11</sup>

The world around these real men is an endless entanglement of relations and reactions, of permutations and combinations where

everything is fluid, everything is constantly changing, constantly coming into being and passing away. In order to understand the totality of this world, a researcher must understand the details ; he must examine each part separately—its nature, special causes, special circumstances and special effects.<sup>12</sup>

Since all knowledge comes from experience, from sensations, from perception,<sup>13</sup> a researcher requires definite logical categories, a definite rational mental processing, if he has to formulate knowledge in a socially meaningful form and to give it an objective expression.<sup>14</sup> But one of the main problems faced by him in his effort at understanding political life is the task of a proper assessment of human behaviour. Human behaviour being an extremely complex quantity, different explanations have been given by different analysts. Different observers have been concerned with different aspects of human behaviour and they have sought to give different explanations according to their focus of interest, experience and temperament. Human behaviour, however, cannot be explained merely in terms of biological needs, or push or pull, or pleasure-pain, or tension reduction models. Marxists hold that attitudes and beliefs cannot be regarded as the result of human faculty alone. According to them, these reflect the social environment. Still, they would not ignore the subjective variables and they hold that everything which sets men in motion must go through their minds, but what form it will take in the mind will depend very much on the circumstances.<sup>15</sup> It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence which determines their consciousness.<sup>16</sup>

It is true that men are the producers of their concepts and ideas. But they carry out this function as real active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of the productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these.<sup>17</sup> The distinctive character of social development, as opposed to natural processes of development, lies in the fact that human consciousness is involved and human beings actively participate in making their own history.<sup>18</sup> There is a real active relationship between the material productive level and the spiritual processes. Each level of the process is determined by the other in the sense that together they make up the unity of the life process.

There is no doubt a lot of truth in the view that all behaviour cannot be explained in terms of personality and other psychological concepts alone. Social and psychological elements in behaviour cannot be separated completely, though they can be isolated for analytical purposes. Man's functional wholeness cannot be disregarded. In fact, human behaviour has to be regarded in its totality. The divergent images of man as seen from different points of observation have to be combined into a unified whole. For this purpose a model which can be called the hologram<sup>19</sup> analysis of political life may be used.

In the hologram analysis human behaviour is to be studied in the context of a system that represents an integral set of elements. Hologram analysis is based on the laws of cognition of integral objects. A hologram regenerates not a two-dimensional image of an object, but the field of the wave which it scatters. By changing the point of observation within the confines of this wave field, we can see the object from different angles, sensing its three-dimensional and realistic nature. If we want to have a total picture of political behaviour, we must change our point of observation within the confines of our particular field of inquiry and try to see the object from different angles. The researcher has to clarify the complex behavioural interference pattern from different angles : for example, from the angle of socioeconomic variables, from that of the psychological variables and at the same time from the angle of the environment.

He may get a total picture of a particular piece of behaviour by analysing the socioeconomic and the psychological elements operative in the environment prevalent in a particular place at a particular time. For this he has to assess all the elements operative in the behaviour set. So he has at the same time to analyse the operation of the basic components of the environment. All these basic components, it must be noted here, are always inextricably linked up with one another along multiple paths and feedback loops. Thus the hologram that will be constructed will actually be the superposition of zone plates,<sup>20</sup> formed by each part of the behaviour set. For this purpose the researcher will have to choose some isolates which will determine the field of the wave.

*Part and Whole*

In the hologram analysis the concept of the whole plays an important role. The part and the whole express the relation within a set of objects and also a connection which unifies these objects, and is responsible for the appearance of the new integrative properties and regularities not found in isolated objects. The type of connection between parts determines also the type of the whole formed.

Perhaps it would not be out of place to mention here the fact that this concept of totality has often been stressed by the marxists. In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx himself expressed the opinion that in spite of the particularity of an individual, man is also the totality, the ideal totality. "... he exists also in the real world both as awareness and real enjoyment of social existence, and as a totality of human manifestation of life."<sup>21</sup> Engels pointed out in *Dialectics of Nature* :

The whole of nature accessible to us forms a system, an interconnected totality of bodies and by bodies we understand here all material existences extending from stars to atoms... In the fact that these bodies are interconnected is already included that they react on one another, and it is precisely this mutual reaction that constitutes motion.<sup>22</sup>

Again, we find Engels commenting :

When... it is a question of investigating the driving powers which...lie behind the motives of men who act in history and which constitute the real ultimate driving forces of history, then it is not a question so much of the motives of single individuals, however eminent, as of those motives which set in motion great masses, whole peoples and again whole classes of the people in each people.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, the splitting of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts is the essence of dialectics.<sup>24</sup> Since society moves dialectically, a student of political life must bear in mind the total picture of the whole. But he must also remember that in order to have a clear idea of the whole we must explain the details. He must remember also that it is his task to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of all the movement and developments<sup>25</sup> in political life. The hologram model thus provides him with an approach to a proper understanding of political life.

The hologram first of all covers individuals as part of the total political — or, in the broader sense, the total social—life. The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality, it is the ensemble of the social relations. The position of an individual in political life is determined not merely by his natural abilities but by his class position, that is, his relation to the means of production, his role in the process of production. Individual or social psychology is not a constant or stagnant entity. Acting on the external world and changing it in the process of labour, man also changes his own nature.<sup>26</sup> While it is true that men are products of circumstances and upbringing it is also true that it is men that change the circumstances.<sup>27</sup> The interaction between socioeconomic environment and behaviour cannot be expressed in terms of a simple linear relationship. Though the economic situation is the basis, the role of the various elements operative on the superstructure, and even their reflexes in the brains of the participants, cannot be ignored. "Political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas" also exercise their influence<sup>28</sup> on political life.

#### *Space-Time Continuum*

In constructing a hologram the researcher must be prepared for two difficulties at the very beginning. In the first place, he does not always consider a particular phenomenon at the moment it actually occurs. Often he looks at it subsequently. He has to reconstruct, so to say, the phenomenon under consideration. For example, when he seeks to analyse electoral behaviour in a particular state in terms of a particular election, he may certainly collect part of his data prior to or during the election. At least a part of the data however will have to be collected at a subsequent point of time. This accentuates the second difficulty: the changing nature of political life. Such changes however are of immense importance in an analysis of political life. While the marxist researcher looks at the political scene in terms of the class, he must also take into consideration the emergence of different groups within a class over time, the changing interaction of these groups and the impact of such changes on the political process. In actual holography the reference beam can be said to "freeze" a light wave in space. The waves surrounding an object can now be recorded as long as desired, since the

distribution of the intensity in space is stable in this case. But in political life such "freezing" is not possible. We cannot hold conditions in political life constant.

In a country like India where the level of development is highly uneven not only in the economic sphere but in almost all other spheres as well, the researcher may find it difficult to explain political life with the help of a single hologram. Multiple holograms — that is a series of micro-holograms — would be necessary for explaining countrywide phenomena such as a peasant or working class movement. This would automatically raise two questions: (a) what should be the field of each micro-hologram, and (b) how such micro-holograms are to be combined.

The first question can be answered with comparative ease. The problem under study in each case would decide the field of the micro-hologram. Here the area to be covered is to be considered not only in the spatial sense but also from the angle of a particular period of time. Thus we might construct one micro-hologram for analysing, for example, a peasant or working class movement in West Bengal in a particular year, another for studying such a movement in Uttar Pradesh at the same point of time, a third one for Bihar and so on. Or, we might prepare micro-holograms for analysing a movement in any state over a particular period of time. We may even prepare such micro-holograms for separate districts or blocks.

It is much more difficult to answer the second question — regarding the problem of combining micro-holograms. The hologram of a particular movement will have one spatial coordinate and one temporal coordinate. This hologram will give us a three-dimensional and realistic image of a movement at a particular point of time. When we try to apply this model for the purpose of analysing political life over time we have to solve the problem of space-time four-dimensionality — spatial three-dimensionality and temporal one-dimensionality. We have to take into consideration the interval that combines spatial distance and the temporal interval. Spatial distance and the temporal interval will obviously be different in different frames of reference. In this context our approach will actually be based on Minkowski's four-dimensional geometry (or geochronometry).

instead of Euclidean geometry.<sup>80</sup> With the help of four-dimensional geometry we can assess the nature of political life in the process of change.

The researcher should realize that application of the hologram model to political life does not mean actual or "pure" holography. It is the principle of holography that is important here and it is this principle that should guide the approach to the problem and the choice of techniques for data collection and data analysis.

### Data Collection

It is quite obvious that for constructing this hologram the researcher will need data. A certain amount of data must be collected before one can undertake political analysis and the methods of data collection must be truly scientific. A political scientist can never understand political reality unless his approach is scientific. In fact any one who desires to assess the true character of political phenomena can ill afford to indulge in idle speculation. He must realize that

Where speculation ends, where real life starts, there...begins real, positive science, the expounding of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men.<sup>80</sup>

Different methods, such as observation, analysis of documentary sources and interviewing, for example, may be employed for data collection. A marxist researcher has to draw upon various sources of data and in data collection he must be involved in multiple operationism. Marx himself did so. Though Marx regretted that the social statistics of Germany and the rest of continental Western Europe were "wretchedly compiled", he admitted that "they raise the veil just enough to let us catch a glimpse of the Medusa head behind it."<sup>81</sup> And he did use statistical data extensively. So did Engels. Lenin's *Development of Capitalism in Russia* is only one example of his reliance on statistical data which can be noted in his numerous writings.

A considerable amount of such data have to be collected from official documents. Marx, for example, used parliamentary debates, reports of the inspectors of factories, reports of various commissions and statistical abstracts in addition to newspapers and periodicals.<sup>82</sup>

In the Soviet Union today state statistical data constitute an important source of research information.<sup>83</sup> But social scientists in the USSR have realized that "surveys can disclose data which it is impossible in principle to reveal by statistics even if the list of collected statistical data be extended".<sup>84</sup>

The commonest tool for such surveys is the questionnaire or interview schedule. Marx himself had drawn up a questionnaire in 1880 for preparing an electoral programme for the workers in connection with the approaching general election in France. Thousands of copies of this questionnaire were distributed to workers' societies, to the socialist and democratic groups and circles, and to the French newspapers for collecting exact and positive knowledge of the conditions in which the working class lived and worked.<sup>85</sup> Structured interviewing is being extensively carried out in the Soviet Union today for the purpose of research.<sup>86</sup> Informal interviewing may also be used. Mao Tsetung, for example, relied on focused interviewing for collecting data for the Hunan Report.<sup>87</sup>

### Data Analysis

The data collected through these methods always help a social scientist in his efforts at analysing mass stochastic phenomena which interact with one another. Since social processes develop as a result of a large number of interacting factors, it is one of the major tasks of a social scientist to assess the role of these factors within the overall process and to identify causal relations and bottlenecks, if any.<sup>88</sup> In fact the question of quantification is intimately associated with efforts to establish political analysis on a scientific basis.

Still, quantification is abhorrent to many people. It may be of interest to note here that one of the criticisms levelled against Marx's *Capital* was that Marx had chosen a "mode of expression" of "the least attractive kind — the mode, namely, of representing the principal points of his argument by algebraical symbols." This was held to be "irritating and confusing" except to the mathematicians.<sup>89</sup>

Even today there are many political scientists who are opposed to the adoption of quantitative techniques. But an individual having faith in the scientific approach can hardly deny the importance of

quantification. Quantification is valuable since it gives precision to data. It is the task of a political scientist to bring out the substance of political phenomena and their connections in the whole diversity of the concrete, to show the interaction of the different forces and the struggle between them, and in this way to gain knowledge of the system as a whole. A political scientist thus cannot afford to ignore the laws of change, and in this process he has to examine the transition of quantity into a new quality. Mathematical and statistical tools help him to bring out the quantitative aspect of political phenomena and the objective quantitative connection between different variables.

If a political scientist desires to make an objective assessment of political phenomena he has to deal with hard data, "precise facts, indisputable facts" which are "especially necessary" for the proper understanding of a "complicated, difficult and often deliberately confused question." Proceeding from these considerations, Lenin says, we are to "begin with statistics, fully aware of course that statistics are deeply antipathetic to certain readers who prefer 'flattering deception' to 'base truths'."<sup>40</sup> A political scientist who does not desire to rest content with "flattering deception" can hardly afford to suffer from the "dread of science, a dread of scientific analysis."<sup>41</sup> And scientific analysis in many cases is inextricably linked up with mathematics. As Karl Marx puts it: "Science can attain perfection only when it succeeds in making use of mathematics."<sup>42</sup>

But the researcher must keep it in mind that the methods to be used for understanding reality have not been established once for all. At times he may have to rely on qualitative methods as well. Actually, the conflict between the quantitative and the qualitative methods is spurious in nature.<sup>43</sup> All phenomena and processes, including political and social ones, possess a unity of quantitative and qualitative characteristics. Qualities reveal themselves in properties each of which is marked by a quantitative gradation according to size, degree of development or intensity. The unity of the quantitative and qualitative aspects in social phenomena is what makes it possible to apply mathematical methods to the investigation of social systems, to describe them in mathematical terms.

Where we speak of a quantitative property we actually refer to a quality to which a number has been assigned, or the magnitude of which has been indicated. The categories of quality and quantity express the multiformity of matter in motion, spatial-temporal connections and relations between objects and phenomena, their distinctions and factors in common. Quality is a stable and integral totality of the essential features of a thing taken in a certain definite relation to other objects of reality. Quantity is to be considered in its connection with the category of quality.

The category of quantity expresses the definiteness of an object from the angle of its individual properties or features. With some reservations, quantity may be taken to mean an object's definiteness that may be expressed by number and magnitude.<sup>44</sup> But it would be wrong to identify quantity completely with these mathematical concepts. It is far from possible to express all quantitative differences in terms of number and magnitude. This becomes obvious from the limited applicability of mathematical methods to the analysis of many social and political phenomena and processes, values and sentiments.

Any attempt to quantify qualitative variables remains essentially fruitless if the formal apparatus of quantification is introduced into the theory of a given complex object as something quite complete in itself—something external with respect to this theory. The procedure of quantification must be preceded by a stage of formalization—by a formalized definition of a given feature of an object under study as an element in the system of concepts characterizing that object as an entity. Fruitful quantification is predicted on the construction of special abstract models of processes and phenomena, rather than on a mere application of the existing mathematical approaches to the empirically observed facts and dependencies.<sup>45</sup> The adoption of quantitative method should not be regarded as an aim in itself. A researcher must remember that quantitative analysis, whatever be its instruments, is no more than a means of bringing out the qualitative characteristics of the processes being investigated.

There are some qualities which in their very nature "elude the net of number however fine its mesh."<sup>46</sup> The knowledge of political

reality requires the coverage of some qualities of this nature. In these cases an attempt at quantification may only mean the loss of valuable information. In order to avoid this loss one has to depend on qualitative methods in all such cases.

A political analyst may at times be concerned with psychological dimensions like attitudes, feelings, motives and thought. Though these offer a valid area of scientific inquiry, they are not directly susceptible to measurement. It is only when they are revealed through behaviour or through verbal or written or any other form of expression that they yield to quantitative analysis. But even in such cases an exact measurement is extremely difficult. We have not yet been able to invent any mechanism or any scientific tool with the help of which we can measure psychological dimensions in exact terms. The tools at our disposal at present are far from adequate. Even by using the tools of psychophysics or adopting a multi-criterion measurement method we cannot go beyond the limits of approximations. Still, we must admit that even an assessment of these limits is essential if we desire to analyse the nature of political life properly. A political analyst who has faith in the scientific approach, and who does not like to remain satisfied only with speculation, cannot avoid measurement of the psychological domain simply because the measurement tools are imperfect.

Advances in political inquiry are inconceivable without a blending of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. Such a synthesis is not merely an interrelation between the demands of the society and the way they are made by science, although this is also an important condition for the full use of the possibilities provided by political theory and practice. In a sense the introduction of quantitative methods in the sphere of research in political science means the perfection of the very system of knowledge in this field. What takes place is the further systematization, authentication and development of the basic concepts of political science whose social efficacy is thereby enhanced.

While examining the political reality a marxist researcher must keep in mind the fact that political inquiry is a difficult task. He must also keep in mind the limitations of his tools and of his own self as a

researcher. As Mao Tsetung stated in one of his instructions issued in 1967 :

One must not always think himself in the right, as if he had all the truth on his side. One should not always think that only he is capable and everybody else is capable of nothing, as if the earth could not turn if he were not there.<sup>47</sup>

At the same time he must strive hard to understand political life. A marxist researcher must not rest content with the skill he has "acquired by previous experience, but under all circumstances to go on, under all circumstances to strive for something bigger, under all circumstances to proceed from simpler to more difficult tasks. Otherwise, no progress whatever is possible..."<sup>48</sup>

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19 The word originates from the Greek *holos* which means "the whole." In modern physics hologram means the intermediate photographic record that contains the information for reproducing a three-dimensional image by holography. Holography is a way of recording and then reconstructing waves. The waves may be of any kind — light, sound, x-ray, corpuscular waves, etc. By using this word Dennis Gabor, inventor of holography, wanted to stress that it records complete information about a wave — both about its amplitude and its phase.

In conventional photography, only the distribution of the amplitude is recorded in a two-dimensional projection of an object onto the plane of the photograph. For this reason, when examining a photograph from various directions, we do not obtain new angles of approach, and we cannot see, for instance, what is happening behind the objects in the foreground. A hologram with a light wave, on the contrary, reproduces three-dimensional images, without cameras or lenses, using photographic film and coherent light (See, for example, Yu. I. Ostrovsky, *Holography and Its Application* (Moscow : Mir Publishers, 1977); L. M. Soroko, *Osnovy Kogerentnoi Optiki i Golografi* (Moscow : Nauka, 1971).

20 A hologram of a point is a system of concentric rings. Such a system is called a Fresnel zone plate.

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- 29 The four-dimensional space-time is a purely geometric notion. Sometimes, following Minkowski, this space is called the "world". Any event occurs at some point of the Minkowski world. Geometric properties of the Minkowski world can be established after some invariant relationship between coordinates of points is found, which can be interpreted as the distance between two points of a manifold. When the distance between points is defined, we may pass from manifold to space. The coordinates of the "world" points are defined with physically different quantities. Considering only inertial frames of references, the interval between events remains the invariant for any pair of events, or, in terms of geometry, for any pair of points in the Minkowski world (See V.A. Ugarov, *Special Theory of Relativity* (Moscow : Mir Publishers, 1979), pp. 118-9 ; and M.E. Omelyanovsky, *Dialectics in Modern Physics* (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1979), pp. 127-30).
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## MARX'S CONCEPT OF MAN: FROM ESSENTIALIST ANTHROPOLOGY TO HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

TAPAN KUMAR CHATTOPADHYAY

SOCIALIST IDEAS HAVE always arisen from a protest against the inhuman capitalist system and a revolt against the exploitation of man by man. Marx's critique of capitalism, especially in his early writings, was basically a revolt against the dehumanization of man in bourgeois society, and his advocacy of the seizure of political power by the proletariat was motivated by an urge to construct a human society where dehumanization is replaced by truly emancipated human labour and man has the necessary conditions for his development and self-affirmation. It is, therefore, most important to understand properly Marx's theory of man. This is not to suggest, however, that a theory of man is to be found solely and exclusively in socialist writings. In fact every theory of State presupposes a theory of man.

Greek political theory is based on an analysis of the nature of man. According to Plato there are three constituent elements of human personality: reason, spirit and appetite. The nature of an individual depends on the predominance of any one of these elements over the remaining two, and in Plato's ideal State political authority should be vested in those people in whom reason enjoys primacy over spirit and appetite. Aristotle also analysed the nature of various categories of men in the Greek city-state and concluded, on the basis of such analysis, that some men are destined to rule and others destined to obey. The collapse of the Greek city-states and the emergence of Christianity led to a consolidation of Papal authority parallel to the political authority of the king. While the authority of the king was legitimized through the political machinery of the state, the social authority of the church was established through Christian theology which emphasized the helplessness of man who is a mere speck in the infinite and whose only emancipation lies in self-realization through the church. Throughout the Christian

era the concept of man was based on the idea of dualism of body and soul. Anthropology then was theological dealing primarily, if not exclusively, with the relationship of man to God. With the emergence of mercantilism and the consequent demand for national markets, corresponding political theories developed to provide a rationale for the nation-state. Hobbes pleaded for the sovereignty of the State internally over all individuals and associations. Credit goes to the Renaissance for giving a secular content to humanism. The Renaissance concept of man rested on the conviction that man's autonomy is to be established not only through freedom vis-a-vis the religious authorities but also from the inhuman power of money. This slavery to the world of money is implicit in Hobbesian description of a state of nature where man's life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. The remedy Hobbes suggested, however, was not individual freedom obtained through an association of free people, but an absolute state. Protests against such absolute monarchy gave rise to a new type of humanism, culminating in the slogan of the French Revolution : "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity". What the French bourgeoisie accomplished in practice, their German counterparts achieved in cognition and German philosophy, as Marx remarked, was the theory of the French Revolution.<sup>1</sup> When Marx was a student in Berlin University, the uncrowned king in German intellectual world was Hegel. Marx discovered that Hegelian philosophy could not be used to understand social reality. While in Paris, as early as 1843, Marx tried to understand social reality not only in terms of philosophy and politics, but through a proper understanding of political economy. He used in the *Paris Manuscripts of 1844* some of the philosophical categories of Hegel as his weapon against the classical political economists and in so doing attempted to analyse the dehumanization of man in the capitalist society. While examining the dehumanized condition of man, Marx used certain expressions and ideas which reflected a strong impact on him of Feuerbach's concept of man. Hence, any analysis of Marx's concept of man should start with Feuerbach's theory of man.

**Feuerbach's concept of Man :** In Feuerbach we find the preservation of the secular content of the Renaissance concept of man and a reflection of the Promethean dream of the omnipotence of man. By

revising the theological concept of the relationship of man to God, Feuerbach declared that man was god. This anthropomorphism of Feuerbach is reflected in his *The Essence of Christianity* (1841).

Feuerbach differed from the classical German philosophers both in his method of approach and in his method of exposition. As early as 1839 Feuerbach characterized his philosophical method as follows : 'The method consists in this : that it aims to achieve a continuous unification of the noble with the apparently common, of the distant with the near-at-hand, of the abstract with the concrete, of the speculative with the empirical, of philosophy with life. ...In speculative philosophy I miss the element of empiricism and in empiricism the element of speculation. My method, therefore, is to unite both not as two different materials but as different principles, empirical activity and speculative activity.'<sup>2</sup> Criticizing speculative philosophy which put the essence of man outside himself, Feuerbach's philosophy wanted to overcome this alienation of man from his essence. How did Feuerbach achieve this ? To answer this question we have to analyse *The Essence of Christianity*. This book was written not with the intention of destroying religion but to reconstruct it. As William Chamberlain rightly observes, 'in considering the essential nature of man, Feuerbach finds the basis of religion to exist in the difference between man and the brute. The difference, according to Feuerbach, is to be found in consciousness, of which he says : "Consciousness in the strictest sense is present only in a being to whom his species, his essential nature, is an object of thought". Religion is identical with this distinctive character of man, is identical with man's consciousness of his own nature'.<sup>3</sup> Pointing out further and more specific difference between men and the brutes, Feuerbach observed that unlike animals men have in them reason, will and affection. Herein lies Feuerbach's anthropological concept of man. 'To will, to love, to think', maintains Feuerbach, 'are the highest powers, are the absolute nature of man as man, and the basis of his existence'.<sup>4</sup>

Man's sense organs are the mediating link between consciousness and the object of consciousness. In the world of material phenomena the consciousness of the object (e.g. awareness of the coffee which he drinks) is separable from the consciousness of the self. In religion,

however, consciousness of the object and consciousness of self coincide ; and hence it is frequently said that the goal of religion is self-realization. But, as Feuerbach argues, nothing has its effect upon man unless it is 'predicated', i. e., the existence of subject is impossible unless it has some predicates or attributes or qualities. We find that when he says that subject without predicate or existence without essence is impossible, he wants to apply this formula not only in the sphere of material world but extends it to religion as well. The implications are clear : God as an object of consciousness has to be predicated. And what are these predicates or attributes of God ? Feuerbach's answer is clear : these are attributes of man. 'The certainty of god is in itself no immediate certainty ; it depends on the certainty of the qualities of God. To the Christian the certainty of god is that of a Christian God ; to a Tibetan the certainty of God is that of Padma Sambhava.'<sup>5</sup> The Christian faith thus incarnates in Deity the nature, needs and hopes of the Christians, thereby excluding, at the same time, the nature, needs and hopes of non-Christian 'heathens'. Thus there are two aspects of the problem. First, there is a religious alienation, consisting in detaching the mind and soul of man from his body, and making of this detached spirit, deprived of a body, their God. In Hegelian idealism, the entire material world is an 'alienation' from the soul. According to Feuerbach, and unlike Hegel, man is the subject ; God, the predicate.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, faith gives rise to egoistic passions in men. It might be said that with reference to faith each religion regards other religions as infinitely inferior and hence the believers in other religions, as well as atheists, are excluded from the sphere of their fraternity. 'Faith abolishes the natural ties of humanity,' wrote Feuerbach, 'to universal, natural unity, it substitutes a particular unity'.<sup>7</sup> The opposite of faith, to Feuerbach, is love and Feuerbach ceaselessly sings in praise of love—pure love, the essence of love, love unrestricted. Christianity is contradictory because it sanctions both types of actions, those flowing from love and those flowing from faith without love. Feuerbach thus replaced the Christian faith by a new religion of love, and through this religion of love Feuerbach sought to overcome the alienation of man from his essence. While criticizing the negative aspects of Christianity, Feuerbach at the same time, analysed the

P, 6993

nature of man. Feuerbach's man was not the individual man but the species man, the communal man. *In Bases of the Philosophy of the Future*, Feuerbach writes : 'The individual man by himself does not contain the nature of man in himself, either in himself as a moral or as a thinking being. The nature of man is contained only in the community, in the unity of man with man.'<sup>8</sup> This unity is possible only through love, which then is the essence of species being. "A loving heart is the beat of the species throbbing in the individual". (*The Essence of Christianity*).<sup>9</sup> Thus deifying love, Feuerbach has replaced one religion by another. However, there is a significant reversal of the Hegelian system, so far as the goal of history is concerned : whereas for Hegel it is the realization of God in man, for Feuerbach it is the realization of man when he ceases to project himself in God. Garaudy rightly asserts that 'the goal of Feuerbach is to liberate man from religion and to arrive at the unity of man with man. It is this humanism that Feuerbach called communism.. . This philosophical "communism" was no more identified with the struggle for the interests of the working class than it was with a radical transformation of bourgeois society'.<sup>10</sup> But this fallacy of Feuerbach was not immediately realized either by Marx or any of his young Hegelian friends. On the contrary, Feuerbach's anthropological materialism had profound impact on the left Hegelians and all of them, as Engels wrote, became at once Feuerbachians.<sup>11</sup> There was however, one aspect in Feuerbach's philosophy which was disapproved by Marx as early as 1843.<sup>12</sup> This was Feuerbach's concept of Nature. To Feuerbach man is product of nature and hence should be grateful to holy nature. 'The sublimity to which man can reach is dependent on the material support which nature gives him. Man needs other men to gratify his human needs but he also needs nature.'<sup>13</sup>

**Three Key Concepts :** In Marx's theory of man there are, fundamentally, three inter-related concepts ; human essence, freedom and alienation. The 'essence' of man is realized through 'freedom' and through overcoming of 'alienation'. How did Marx use and explain these concepts in his various writings ? The answer to this question is sought to be given in the remaining part of this essay, thereby trying to trace the evolution of Marx's theory of man.

**Marx's Doctoral Dissertation :** When his father died in May 1838, Marx gave up the idea of specializing in law and devoted himself entirely to philosophy. This interest in philosophy was enhanced by his friendship with Bruno Bauer. Through Bauer he became associated with the Doctors' club in Berlin and very soon became a prominent member of the young Hegelian circle. After Hegel's death the Hegelians were divided into 'Left' and 'Right'. While the latter tried, in the spirit of their master, to reconcile philosophy and religion, the Left Hegelians asserted that philosophy is reason whereas religion is blind faith. This Left Hegelian position is reflected in Marx's early writings, especially in his doctoral dissertation, the subject matter of which was *Difference Between the Democratic and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*, and for which he received his doctoral degree from the University of Jena in 1841. Marx regarded Epicurus as 'the greatest representative of Greek Enlightenment'<sup>14</sup> since he explicitly indicated the beginning of true philosophy : a rational attitude to reality which rejects superstition. Religious view of things is the result of man's consciousness produced by fear and ignorance. The fantastic religious view of the world is to be overcome by a rational view. Thus Marx equated philosophy with reason and religion with unreason. He regarded the 'proof' of the existence of god as 'hollow tautologies'.<sup>15</sup> Marx regarded religion as almost the chief force which was enslaving man. Against this slavery the symbol of freedom was the confession of Prometheus : 'In simple words, I hate the pack of Gods.'<sup>16</sup> Thus, as early as 1841, Marx started a theoretical struggle against religious alienation. However, there were two important weaknesses in his polemic against religion at this earliest stage of his intellectual development. First, he was yet to realize the close bond between idealism and religion. While regarding religion as irrational, he declared, in the dedication of his dissertation to Ludvig von Westphalen, that 'idealism is no figment of the imagination, but a truth'. Secondly, Marx was yet to realize that religions have their material roots, that these notions are not arbitrary, but constitute a specific form of social consciousness.<sup>17</sup>

**The Rheinische Zeitung :** The Left Hegelian critique of religion antagonized the church which was a supporting column of the Prussian state. Obviously, therefore, Left Hegelian ideas were

regarded with suspicion by the 'Christian State'. Some of these Left Hegelians were dismissed from teaching posts in various universities. Under such circumstances Marx gave up all hope of a university career and chose journalism as a means of political practice. He began contributing to the *Rheinische Zeitung* ('Rhenish Gazette'), a paper financed by the liberal middle class of Rhineland. The paper was published from January 1, 1842, and Marx became its editor in October.

In his *Rheinische Zeitung* articles the 'essence of man' was Marx's conceptual tool with which he analysed history and political practice. The essence of man is freedom and reason. Freedom is the essence of man just as weight is the essence of bodies. Freedom is enjoyed only through the exercise of reason and not through caprice. The impact of Kant and Fichte is clearly revealed in Marx's suggestion that human freedom is autonomy, obedience to the inner law of reason.

In 'Debates on Freedom of the Press' Marx opines that freedom is not 'merely an individual property of certain persons and social estates' but 'the natural gift of the universal sunlight of reason'.<sup>18</sup> 'Freedom is so much the essence of man that even its opponents implement it while combating its reality ; they want to appropriate for themselves as a most precious ornament what they have rejected as an ornament of human nature'.<sup>19</sup> Thus free press is essential because 'the essence of the free press is the characterful, rational, moral essence of freedom'.<sup>20</sup> Criticizing censorship law, Marx writes : 'The censorship law is a law of suspicion against freedom. The press law is a vote of confidence which freedom gives itself ... The press law is a real law because it is the positive existence of freedom.'<sup>21</sup>

Thus Marx argues in favour of the free press and the whole argument is based on a philosophy of man. The essence of man is freedom and freedom is the gift of universal reason. Since this universal reason can be exercised through the free press human essence can be realized through freedom of the press.

Freedom of the press is essential to remind the State of its duty to itself. In 'The Leading Article in No. 179 of the *Kolnische*

*Zeitung*' Marx explained the philosophical task of the Left Hegelians : 'Philosophy interprets the rights of humanity and demands that the state should be a state of human nature.'<sup>22</sup> This demand is to be expressed by way of public criticism through the press. Thus Althusser has correctly pointed out that in defining this politico — philosophical task Marx tried to justify 'his own *practice* : the journalist's public criticism that he saw as political action *par excellence*'.<sup>23</sup> The objective of this political practice is to project the image of an ideal state based on reason and freedom. Thus Marx says that modern philosophy (i.e. Hegel and after) 'looks on the state as the great organism, in which legal, moral, and political freedom must be realized, and in which individual citizen in obeying the laws of the state, only obeys the natural laws of his own reason, of human reason'.<sup>24</sup> Thus Marx's analysis of the state by way of politico-philosophical criticism was based on his concept of 'human essence' as realized through freedom and universal reason.

In his *Rheinische Zeitung* articles Marx moves gradually from philosophy to politics and then to political economy, but the conceptual tool all through remains the 'essence of man'. In 'Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood' Marx analysed an economic problem with a humanist approach. In the Rhenish Parliament a more stringent law was proposed in regard to thefts of timber. It was proposed that the keeper be the sole arbiter of an alleged offence and that he should have the power to assess the damages. The keeper was the landowner's man and, therefore, could not be an impartial judge. While examining the debates in the Rhenish Parliament on the proposed law, Marx claimed that the state should defend the poor against the rich. Marx declared that wood was the Rhinelanders' 'fetish', i.e., a dead thing that maintains 'a secret domination over living man ; the natural relationships of domination and possession are reversed, and man is determined by timber, because timber is a commodity that is merely an objectified expression of socio-political relationships.'<sup>25</sup> The concept of 'fetish' recurs in *Capital*, but whereas in his early writings Marx regards fetish as a dehumanizing factor in general, in *Capital* fetishism is regarded as misleading representation in a specific historical context. We shall try to examine in this present essay the concept of fetishism of commodities in more detail when we come to the concept of man in *Capital*.

**Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State:** The *Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed in March 1843 and Marx decided to start another paper jointly with Arnold Ruge from outside Germany, and the place ultimately chosen was Paris. However, before going to Paris Marx wrote a critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State. In this critique we find the strong influence of Feuerbach's humanism on Marx. Marx had read Feuerbach as early as 1841 but the latter's influence on him was clearly reflected in 1843 when he tried to evaluate Hegel's Philosophy of the state.

The Prussian Government showed no possibility of becoming Hegel's 'rational state'. This motivated Marx to write a *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State*. To Hegel, human consciousness manifested itself objectively in man's juridical, moral, social and political institutions ; and human liberty is attained through the successive groups of family, civil society and the state. The family (with its unity) is the thesis, civil society (with its particularity) is the anti-thesis, and the state (with its universality) is the synthesis. Hence the state, synthesizing particular rights and universal reason is, to Hegel, 'the reality of concrete liberty'. To Hegel, this 'universal reason' was present to a great extent in the existing Prussian state. Marx reviewed the monarchical, executive and legislative powers into which, according to Hegel, the state divided itself, and showed the conspicuous absence of harmony in each ease.<sup>26</sup>

Instead of monarchy Marx wanted a republican democracy. He justified democracy from a humanist approach : 'Hegel starts from the state and makes man the subjectified state ; democracy starts from man and makes the state objectified man. Just as it is not religion which creates man but man who creates religion, so it is not the constitution which creates the people but the people which creates the constitution'.<sup>27</sup> Thus Marx was in favour of a humanist form of government in which the only subject of the political process was the free socialised man. Like Hegel, Marx considered the aim to be the realization of an essence ; but unlike Hegel (and like Feuerbach) the essence was to be realized not through the realization of the idea but through the realization of 'species being'. Thus, at this stage of his intellectual development, Marx's historical analysis and political review was based on Feuerbachian humanism, i.e. on a

concept of anthropological man whose goal was to overcome religious and political alienation through the realization of the species essence.

**The Deutsch Französische Jahrbücher :** (The Franco-Prussian Annals) : The goal of this paper (published from Paris with Marx and Ruge as joint editors) was to find out the path of human emancipation; and to achieve this goal the immediate task, according to Marx, was to demystify religious and political problems by 'reform of consciousness'. In a letter to Ruge, written from Germany in September 1843, Marx declared : 'our motto must be : reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analysing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself, whether it manifests itself in a religious or a political form'.<sup>28</sup> In the articles Marx wrote for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* the concept of man as a 'communal being', a 'species being', was the basis of all theoretical analysis.

Of his two essays published in February 1844 in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* the first, 'On the Jewish Question' was a review of an article written by Bruno Bauer in the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* in November 1842. The Jews in Prussia were enjoying rights far inferior to those of Christians, and this motivated Bauer to take up his pen against the 'christian state'. To Bauer, in order to live together, both Jews and Christians had to renounce what separated them. According to Bauer human rights and universal emancipation would be possible if the absolute state in Prussia was replaced by a secular state where political democracy would be established and where religious prejudice and religious separation would vanish. Marx criticized Bauer for equating political emancipation with human emancipation. Marx argued that even in a constitutional and secular state there are religious prejudices. In a political democracy the political sphere is freed from religious influences but religious prejudices do exist at the level of civil society. Pointing out the case of France and the free states of North America, Marx said that the citizens might still be bound by the limitations of a religion from which a state had shaken itself free. In a secular state the state does not profess any particular religion, i.e. there is no *state religion*, but this does not mean that the citizens have ceased to be religious. 'The state can be a *free state* without man being a *free man* ... man,

even if he proclaims himself an atheist through the medium of the state, that is, if he proclaims the state to be atheist, still remains in the grip of religion, precisely because he acknowledges himself only by a round-about route, only through an intermediary. Religion is precisely the recognition of man in a round-about way, through an *intermediary*. The state is the intermediary between man and man's freedom.<sup>29</sup> In North America many states have 'abolished' religion and private property as far as the constitution was concerned by declaring that neither religious nor property qualification was necessary for voting. But this, instead of really abolishing religion and private property, actually presupposed them. The result was a twofold division of man's being : man as a member of the political community (i.e. citizen) and man as a member of the civil society (i.e. civil man). In political community man regards himself as communal being, a species being : in civil society he is active as a private individual and leads an egoistic life.

Marx pointed out the distinction between the rights of the *citizen* and the rights of *man*. The rights of the citizen were of a political order, expressing man's participation in the universality of the state. These rights contained the social essence of man, albeit in an abstract form. On the contrary, the rights of man in general (i.e. as member of civil society) were expressions of the division of bourgeois society and had nothing social about them. The rights of man as member of civil society were the rights of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community.<sup>30</sup> This was the case with all varieties of political democracy, even the most radical. The French Constitution, for instance, guaranteed the rights of liberty, equality, property and security. Liberty as the power to do everything that does not harm the rights of others, was, according to Marx, 'based not on the association of man with man, but on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the *restricted* individual, withdrawn into himself'.<sup>31</sup> The right of man to private property, that is, the right to dispose of one's possessions as one wills without regard to others, was 'the right of self-interest ... It makes every man see in other men not the realization of his own freedom, but the barrier to it'.<sup>32</sup> Equality was the equal right to the liberty described above, and security was the insurance of egoism. 'None of the so-called rights of man,

therefore, go beyond egoistic man, beyond man as a member of civil society, that is, an individual withdrawn into himself, into the confines of his private interests and private caprice, and separated from the community. In the rights of man, he is far from being conceived as a species being ; on the contrary, species-life itself, society, appears as a framework external to the individuals as a restriction of their original independence.<sup>83</sup> In political democracies, including revolutionary France, the rights of citizen were subordinated to the rights of man. Political democracy, however, was not to be denigrated since it was a great step forward. The essential political emancipation should not be regarded as identical with human emancipation. How, then, can there be human emancipation ? Marx answers explicitly ; 'Only when the real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a *species-being* in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation, only when man has recognized and organized his own powers as *social forces*, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political power*, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished.'<sup>84</sup> This is a typical Feuerbachian approach : man is species man and realization of this species essence is actual human emancipation. Thus an anthropological concept of man was here Marx's framework for interpretation of history and politics.

This impact of Feuerbachian humanism is also revealed in Marx's second essay published in the *Deutsch Französische Jahrbücher* namely, 'Introduction to the critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law.' It was written as an introduction to a proposed rewriting of his 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State'. Marx began his 'Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law' with a brief summary of the *criticism of religion*. 'The basis of irreligious criticism is : Man makes religion, religion does not make man ... But man is no abstract being encamped outside the world. Man is *the world of man*, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion, an *inverted world-consciousness*, because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of that world, its encyclopaedic compendium. ...The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly a fight against *the world* of which religion is the spiritual aroma.'<sup>85</sup>

This was particularly true for Germany where criticism of religion was, according to Marx, the premise of all criticism. 'Premise' due to two reasons. First, religion was one of the chief pillars of the Prussian state, and, secondly, religion was the most extreme point of alienation. For Germany, however, the criticism of religion was, as Marx observed, more or less completed. Hence the task was to turn from the criticism of religion to the criticism of politics and law. 'The criticism of religion ends with the teaching than man is the highest being for man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being.'<sup>86</sup> With his direct contact with the working class in Paris, Marx concluded that in civil society the extreme representative of this 'debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being' was the proletariat. Hence the proletariat was 'to overthrow all relations' which degrade man and make him a contemptible being. The proletarian revolution in Germany, however, should not be a 'partial' one leading merely to political emancipation, but should be a 'radical' one to achieve 'universal emancipation'. Istvan Meszaros has correctly pointed out the limitations of Marx which are in evidence in these essays. What Marx meant by a 'partial' revolution is clear : it is political partiality, i.e. identified only with the political sphere. But his concept of 'universal' emancipation had not been concretized but is grasped in its rather abstract generality. 'The identification of universality', says Meszaros, 'with the ontologically fundamental sphere of *economics* is a later achievement in Marx's thought. At this stage his references to political economy are still rather vague and generic.'<sup>87</sup> This limitation notwithstanding, the methodological significance is explicit. Philosophy, in the form of criticism of religion, politics and economics, is the affirmation of man ; and the dehumanized condition of the proletariat is the negation. 'The penetration of philosophy into the proletariat,' to use Louis Althusser's language, 'will be the conscious revolt of the affirmation against its own negation, the revolt of man against his inhuman conditions. Then the proletariat will negate its own negation and take possession of itself in communism'.<sup>88</sup> Thus we find here a theory of praxis, though in an abstract form. This is clear from Marx's concluding passages of this article : 'As philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its

*spiritual weapons in philosophy.* And once the lightning of thought has squarely struck this ingeneous soil of the people the emancipation of the *Germans into human beings* will take place.<sup>39</sup> There is, therefore, an element of truth in Alan Swingewood's observation that the concept of praxis constitutes the link between Marx's early and later writings.<sup>40</sup> Praxis means the class struggle, a conscious, revolutionary practice. But, whereas in Marx's later writings the revolutionary practice of the proletariat is analysed from the standpoint of historical materialism here the analysis is based on Feuerbachian anthropological concept of human essence.

**The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts :** When the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* was closed down (mainly due to financial difficulties and differences of opinion between Marx and Ruge), Marx began to compose, during the summer of 1844, a critique of political economy. This critique is popularly known as *Paris Manuscripts of 1844* or the *EPM* (*The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*). In these manuscripts are found a detailed discussion of the most fundamental concept of Marx's theory of man, namely the concept of alienation. Marx, as we have already noted, had discovered religious alienation in his doctoral thesis and political alienation in 'On the Jewish Question'. In his criticism of Hegel on constitutional law Marx had already regarded private property as a source of alienation. In the *EPM* Marx dwells on alienation in the economic sphere. The concept of alienation is also to be found in Marx's later writings, especially in *The German Ideology*, the *Grundrisse* and, in a somewhat different form, in the *Capital*. The analysis of alienation in his pre-*EPM* writings were based on Hegelian and Feuerbachian anthropology ; in post-*EPM* writings the basis was historical materialism. The *EPM*, as Ernest Mandel has rightly asserted, is the transition from the earlier anthropology to the working out of historical materialism. In this transition we find a juxtaposition of anthropological and historical elements.<sup>41</sup> The combination of those two elements, however, is not a coherent one, as we shall presently see.

Marx begins his analysis of alienation in the *EPM* by regarding alienated labour as a product of a specific historical context : 'We proceed from an *actual* economic fact. The worker becomes all the

poorer the more wealth he produces ... The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. The *devaluation* of the world of men is in direct proportion to the *increasing value* of the world of things'.<sup>42</sup> But immediately after this observation Marx abandons the historical path and does not try to examine scientifically this historical context. On the contrary, we come to a passage in the *EPM* where the origin of alienated labour is sought to be explained not in terms of a specific form of human society, but in terms of human nature and nature in general, and alienated labour is contrasted to the qualities of a 'species being', i.e. the anthropological man. This anthropological concept of alienation subordinates the socio-historical fragments and thus there is a contradiction within the *EPM*. This contradiction was solved in *The German Ideology* (written in 1845) where the anthropological approach was abandoned, and where Marx pointed out the precise historical roots of the origin and development of alienation and also the conditions for its withering away.

With this background in mind, let us now examine Marx's concept of man as is found in the *EPM*. For Marx, it is man's nature to be productive, to express freely his own specific human powers and grasping the world outside him with these powers. In other words, it is man's nature to develop himself through a continuous process of interchange with the world outside of himself in co-operation with his fellow men. This progressive interchange between man and the world constitutes man's 'life activity', labour being thus man's 'self-confirming essence'. For the *free* expression of his human powers it is essential for man to be both the initiator and controller of his productive activity. In the actual world, however, man no longer initiates or controls this productive process, i.e. he is no longer the subject in which the process originates. Just as in religion it is god who is the subject of the historical process and man is a dependent object, so in economics it is money that controls man as if he is merely an object. Hence there is no *free* expression of man's creative labour. Man's labour is controlled by another person (i.e. the capitalist) or thing (i.e., the cash nexus). Since labour is forced and not voluntary, man fails to realize his essence. Man, in other words, is alienated from his nature.

There are four aspects of this alienation : alienation from the product of labour, alienation from the act of production, alienation from species life, and alienation from fellow men. Labour's product confronts the worker as something alien, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour, as labour embodied in an object, is the objectification of labour. 'Labour's realization', says Marx, 'is its objectification. Under these economic conditions this realization of labour appears as *loss of realization* for the workers, objectification as *loss of the object and bondage to it*; appropriation as *estrangement, as alienation*'.<sup>43</sup> 'The worker'. Marx continues, 'puts his life into the object ; but now this life no longer belongs to him but to the object. ...The alienation of the worker in his product means ... that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien'.<sup>44</sup> This alienation, however, is manifested not only in the product of labour but in the very act of production since the product is the result of producing activity. The worker's activity is not his spontaneous activity. His labour is not voluntary : it is forced labour. In his work, therefore, 'he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself.'<sup>45</sup> Hence, as a result of man's alienation in the act of production, he feels himself freely active only in such functions as eating, drinking and procreating, functions which, separated from all other spheres of human activity and turned into sole and ultimate ends, are nothing but animal functions. On the contrary, - in his actual human functions, i.e. working on and transforming the world outside him through productive activity, he feels himself to be an animal. Marx therefore regards man's alienation in the act of production as self-alienation, estrangement of 'himself from himself'.

The third aspect of alienation is alienation from species-life. According to Marx, self-consciousness and universality are the two characteristics of species life. The universality of man is reflected in his capacity to appropriate for his own use the whole realm of nature. Nature provides man with his direct means of life as well as the material, object, and the instrument of his life activity. Since man lives on nature, hence, according to Marx, nature is man's

*inorganic body.* Through free and spontaneous interchange with nature man can realize his own species essence. It is true that animals also produce, but they produce one-sidedly and only due to physical needs. Man, however, produces universally (and not one-sidedly) 'even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom. ...An animal forms objects only in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms objects in accordance with the laws of beauty.'<sup>46</sup> Thus in his work upon inorganic nature, man proves himself to be a conscious species being. Production is his active species life. The object of labour, i.e. work, is the objectification of man's species-life. Through such objectification man realizes himself both intellectually, consciously, and actively in reality. But under inhuman economic conditions man is alienated from his species-life. 'In estranging from man (1) nature, and (2) himself, his own active functions, his life activity, estranged labour estranges the *species* from man. It changes for him the *life of the species* into a means of individual life. First it estranges the life of the species and individual life, and secondly it makes individual life in its abstract form the purpose of the life of the species, likewise in its abstract and estranged forms.'<sup>47</sup> Since the 'life activity' of man (i.e. his free, conscious and spontaneous producing activity) is alienated and turned into a mere means of existence, man had lost his species-being. In depriving man of the objects he produces, man is deprived of his objective species life.

Marx then comes to the fourth aspect of alienation : alienation of man from other men. The proposition that 'man is alienated from species being' means that one man is alienated from another since each man is alienated from the species essence.

Now, the fact that both the produce of man's labour and the activity of production have become alien to him means that another man has to control his product and activity. This 'another man', according to Marx, is the capitalist, the owner of private property. There is, argues Marx, a reciprocal relationship between private property and alienated labour : private property is the *product*

of alienated labour and the *means* by which labour alienates itself. The peculiarity of his language notwithstanding, what Marx wishes to say is clear : social labour is the creator of all value and thus the source of the distribution of wealth. From here Marx comes to two important conclusions : first, that private property is linked with wages, and the downfall of one leads to the downfall of the other, and, secondly, that universal human emancipation is to be brought about by the emancipation of the workers because 'the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production.'<sup>48</sup>

As a result of the dehumanized effects of alienation man has ceased to be a social, human being. How can man be restored as a social, i.e. human being ? Marx says that this restoration of man as *man* is possible under communism : 'Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man ; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e. human) being—a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism as fully developed naturalism equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism ; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man'.<sup>49</sup> Communism, by negating private property negates economic alienation. This supersession of economic alienation, according to Marx, leads to the supersession of all alienations. Pointing out the social character of communism, Marx says : 'The *social* character is the general character of the whole movement : just as society itself produces man as man, so is society produced by him. Activity and enjoyment, both in their content and in their mode of existence, are social : social activity and social enjoyment.'<sup>50</sup> This is so even when an individual's activity is such that it can be seldom performed in direct community with others, because the material of my activity (including the language in which one is thinking) is a social product. Moreover, man's own existence is social activity. Man, in other words, is a social being, a species being. The impact of Feuerbach on Marx is, thus, clearly reflected. In the Preface to the *EPM*, Marx says, 'It is only with Feuerbach that positive, humanistic and naturalistic criticism begins. The less

noise they make, the more certain, profound, extensive, and enduring is the effect of Feuerbach's writings, the only writings since Hegel's *Phanomenologie* and *Logik* to contain a real theoretical revolution.'<sup>51</sup>

With the supersession of alienation man is to become unalienated. The unalienated man, according to Marx, is 'total' and 'all-sided'. The overcoming of alienation, observes Marx, is to lead to a total liberation of all human faculties (e.g. seeing, hearing, testing, feeling, etc.) Through free and spontaneous intercourse between unalienated man and nature, nature becomes humanized. Hence the human sense and the humanity of the senses come into being through the existence of their object, i.e. through nature humanized. With the supersession of economic alienation not only are the five senses liberated but the 'mental senses' also become humanized. The poverty-stricken man has no sense for the finest play. The starving man appreciates food in an animal way; the dealer in minerals sees only the commercial value but not the beauty of the mineral. Hence, according to Marx, 'the objectification of the human essence' is required to make man's sense *human*, and this is possible only with the positive transcendence of alienation.

Thus in the *EPM* the 'essence of man' is the theoretical basis of Marx's analysis of the 'inhuman' economic conditions. The concept of man in the *EPM* is basically anthropological with the historical dimensions scattered here and there. Marx's assertion that the downfall of the system based on private property and wages would lead to man's control over labour and products of labour, is an assertion in which alienation is regarded as the product of a specific socio-economic system. But this does not imply that in the *EPM* Marx had already discovered a scientific and rigorous theory of history. On the contrary, the historical dimensions in the *EPM* are subordinated to the overall Feuerbachian anthropological tone of Marx.

**'Continuity' or 'Break'?** *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* were first published in German in 1932. Since then there has been a great controversy around Marx's concept of man. It is possible to distinguish two extreme positions regarding Marx's humanism. For the sake of convenience let us refer these extreme positions as the 'continuity' school and the 'dichotomy' school.

Let us take the 'continuity' school first. Adam Schaff, Leszek Kolakowski, Ernst Fischer, Maximilian Rubel and Erich Fromm are the most conspicuous representatives of this school. The basic contention of this school is that Marx's concept of man as is found in his early writings (i.e. upto *EPM*) has been retained in his later works. The authors, mentioned above, try to deny that there is any difference between the *EPM* and *Capital*. They argue that 'human essence' and 'alienation' constitute the cornerstone of Marx's social theory. As Erich Fromm says, 'It is of the utmost importance for the understanding of Marx to see how the concept of alienation was and remained the focal point in the thinking of the young Marx who wrote the *EPM*, and of the "old" Marx who wrote *Capital*'.<sup>52</sup> Fromm also argues that though in his later works Marx no longer used the term 'essence', 'he clearly retained the notion of this essence in a more historical version'.<sup>53</sup> There is thus a continuity in Marx's concept of 'essence of man'.

The historical reasons behind the emergence of this 'continuity' thesis are not difficult to identify. The first complete German edition of *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* was published in 1927, and that of the *EPM* and *The German Ideology* in 1932. The publication of these hitherto unknown writings of Marx was obviously a factor behind the emergence of this 'continuity' school. Added to this was a general feeling of discontent against the modus operandi of the Communist Party of Soviet Union. It was felt that 'power' in the Soviet Union has ceased to remain a *means* to an end, and has become *an end in itself*, the result being a concentration and consolidation of power at the highest echelon of CPSU, thereby leading to a denial of *human freedom*. Hence the necessity of defining freedom and that too in Marxist terminology. In these conditions the publication of the *EPM* was regarded as a golden discovery. The 'essential' Marx, the genuine fighter for human freedom and dignity was sought to be found in his concept of 'human essence'. The search for humanism in Marx's writings gathered momentum especially after the Second World War when war, not only in the conventional sense, but a thermonuclear war threatened complete annihilation of mankind. As Roger Garaudy observes, after the Second World War all philosophies 'had to become philosophies of existence because the foundations of human

existence had been questioned and the answer could no longer be delayed.<sup>54</sup>

The extremism of this school is revealed in the contention that the concept of man which was Marx's tool for analysing political economy in the *EPM* and the concept of man in *Capital* are basically identical. This is to suggest a continuity in *Capital* of the essentialist anthropology of Marx's early writings, and to reduce the significance of *Capital* by regarding it merely as an ethical treatise declaiming against inhuman capitalist exploitation. Such misreading of Marx's later works is based on a failure to distinguish between essentialist anthropology of young Marx and historical materialism of mature Marx.

Against this extreme position, a group of official communist writers raised their protests and these protests took the form of another extreme position which, for the sake of analysis, may be described as the 'dichotomy' school. Auguste Cornu, Emile Bottigelli, Manfred Buhr and Louis Althusser are the outstanding representatives of this school; the last named is probably the most widely-known. The basic contention of this 'dichotomy' school is that the writings of Marx upto 1844 are immature, ideological and unscientific. Marx's maturation began in 1845 and since then he rejected one by one the concepts he used upto the *EPM*. Since the *EPM* is the work of immature Marx, hence the concept of alienation is, according to Louis Althusser, a 'pre-Marxist concept'<sup>55</sup> found in the ideological problematic of young Marx, which problematic was replaced by a scientific one since *The German Ideology*, a process finally consummated in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Althusser argues that 'there is an unequivocal "epistemological break" in Marx's work which does in fact occur at the point where Marx himself locates it', i.e. at the level of *The German Ideology*.<sup>56</sup> It is true that in 1859, in the *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx said that in 1845 he and Engels resolved to settle accounts with their earlier philosophical conscience. Althusser takes this as a rejection of mature Marx of all his earlier concepts upto the *EPM*, i.e. a rejection by Marx since 1845 of his earlier 'problematic of human nature or essence of man'. 'By founding the theory of history (historical materialism), Marx

simultaneously broke with his erstwhile ideological philosophy and established a new philosophy (dialectical materialism).<sup>87</sup> Thus Marx's works since 1845 are regarded as 'scientific' in contrast with the 'ideological' works before 1845. Althusser regards Marx's writings of 1845 (i.e. *The Theses on Feuerbach and The German Ideology*) as works of the break, the works of the period between 1845 and '57 as transitional works, and works after 1857 as Marx's mature works.

Althusser is correct in so far as he observes that since 1845 Marx's theory of history and politics was no longer based on the anthropological concept of species-being but on such scientific concepts as social formation, productive forces, relations of production, superstructure, determination in the last instance by the economy, etc. There is indeed a 'break' in the sense that after 1845 Feuerbachian humanism was no more Marx's conceptual framework with which to understand social reality. But an overemphasis on this 'break' leads Althusser to the conclusion that the basic ideas of the *EPM* and earlier works were rejected by the 'mature' Marx, and that alienation is a 'pre-Marxist concept'. This extreme position is unacceptable because passages dealing with alienation are plentiful, as we shall see very soon, not only in *The German Ideology*, but also in Marx's writings after 1857, the date which Althusser himself marks out as the beginning of the period of Marx's mature works.

Dialectically understood, the history of Marx's intellectual development contains both continuity and break. To overemphasise continuity is to reduce the author of *Capital* to merely a loyal disciple of Feuerbach's humanist school; to overemphasize 'break' is to create two Marxes, one fighting against the other. Between the writing of *EPM* and *Capital* Marx had decisively rejected Feuerbach's humanistic philosophy as the starting point for social theory. But it does not follow from this that Marx abandoned the basic concepts of his earlier writings. Marx's fundamental motivation, throughout his life, was to protest against the exploitation of man by man. From his early works he tried to make a proper diagnosis of the exploiting conditions of man and to prescribe a remedy for man's emancipation. To do this Marx started analysing social reality in terms of the conceptual frameworks prevalent at the time, and in the

process finding these conceptual tools to be inadequate, rejecting them one by one until finally he discovered his own method. Though upto 1844 Marx's conceptual tools were Hegelian and Feuerbachian philosophical anthropology (which regarded alienation as rooted in human nature and to be overcome only through philosophical cognizance) Marx decisively moved ahead of both Hegel and Feuerbach when in Paris, in October 1843, he discovered the proletariat as the representative of 'loss of humanity' as well as the vehicle of human emancipation. Whereas in his early works Marx regarded man as member of a species (i.e. homo sapien), in later works he was interested in regarding man as member of a particular class in a particular socio-economic context. Thus the concept of man is to be found also in Marx's mature works, but it is the historical man instead of the anthropological man.

Let us now try to understand Marx's historical concept of man and, at the time, compare the historical version with the earlier anthropological notion. To do this we have to examine Marx's works since 1845. Since it is impossible, within the scope of a single article, to examine all the 'later works' of Marx, we shall confine ourselves to the following texts : *The Theses on Feuerbach*, *The German Ideology*, *The Grundrisse*, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital*.

**The Theses on Feuerbach :** In January 1845 Marx, being expelled from France, went to Brussels where Engels joined him later. In Brussels Marx wrote his *Theses on Feuerbach* and then, with Engels as co-author, *The German Ideology*. In the very first thesis Marx points out the defect of pre-Marxian materialism. 'The chief defect of all previous materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that things, ... reality, sensuousness are conceived only in the form of the object, or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively'.<sup>5e</sup> In other words, pre-Marxian materialism regarded sensuousness as a passive state caused merely by the impact of external things on man and thus failed to realize that sensuousness is man's own activity, practice. According to Marx, man, in his sensuous activity, is not merely the object influenced by the environment, but also the subject who transforms this environment through social practice. Social practice is man's conscious and

purposeful activity, and this activity constitutes the material basis of cognition. Previous materialism failed to understand this active, subjective aspect of the process of cognition. It is true that Feuerbach recognised, to some extent at least, the importance of activity (practice) in the process of cognition. But this sensuous human activity was mistakenly regarded by Feuerbach as merely a totality of psychic acts. But practice, as Marx points out, is not merely a psychic process (although it includes psychic acts), but the collective endeavour of individuals to change the objective world. While contemplative materialism failed to understand the subjective aspect of cognition, the idealists emphasized the subjective side, but only abstractly since idealism 'does not know real, sensuous activity as such'. (Thesis 1)<sup>69</sup>. Against both these trends Marx tried to show, as Oizerman has rightly put it, 'the dialectical character of reflection, the dialectics of the subjective and the objective'.<sup>70</sup>

In *Theses on Feuerbach* Marx emphasizes the concept of *revolutionary practice*, i.e. the class struggle that transforms social relations. 'The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated. ... The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary practice*'.<sup>71</sup> Men themselves change as they change social relations through class struggle and revolutionary practice. This concept of revolutionary practice is the basis of historical materialism and scientific communism. Since Feuerbach failed to realize this concept, his theory of man and religion was basically anthropological devoid of socio-historical dimensions. Feuerbach failed to realize that religion is historically transient, that religious consciousness is a social product. Marx says that criticism of religion, therefore, should include the criticism of society: 'once the earthly family is discovered to be the secret of the holy family, the former must then itself be destroyed in theory and in practice'. (Th.4)<sup>72</sup>

To Feuerbach, overcoming of religious alienation means the realization of the 'essence of man', and the essence of man, according to Feuerbach's definition, is an 'abstraction inherent in each single individual'. (Th.6)<sup>73</sup> According to Feuerbach the species-life

constitutes the human substance, and each individual by definite features of the species, is an embodiment of the human substance. Criticizing this Feuerbachian definition of the essence of man, Marx says : 'But the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations' (Th.6)<sup>64</sup>, i.e., the substance of man is the totality of social relations. Social relations in a particular historical context are determined by the level of development of the productive forces. Hence the substance of man, i.e., the totality of the social relations, is created by mankind itself in the course of history. Man himself creates world history by working on and transforming the objective world. This creative activity of man is the premise of historical materialism which distinguishes Marx from pre-Marxian materialism. This is clear in the eleventh thesis where Marx says : 'The Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways ; the point is to change it'.<sup>65</sup> This marks an evolution of Marx's concept of man. Whereas in the *EPM* man's social substance is linked mainly with a characterisation of the human nature of the individual, here man is regarded both as the creator of history as well as the product of history.

**The German Ideology :** Here Marx no longer uses such phraseologies as 'human essence' or 'species being', regarding them as too abstract and unhistorical. In *The German Ideology* he ridicules Stirner for still holding on to these expressions. It is true indeed that since 1845 Marx had replaced these generic notions by historical ones. But this does not mean a total rupture. On the contrary, we find in Marx's works since 1845 a historical and scientific version of some of his earlier ideas.

In the *EPM* the 'species character' of man is said to be realized through conscious and free productive activity. In *The German Ideology* this productive activity is regarded as the criterion on the basis of which man distinguishes himself from animals. 'Men ... themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their material life'.<sup>66</sup> The very language shows that in place of the earlier

anthropological approach, here the approach has a socio-historical dimension. This historical approach is clearly reflected in a passage where Marx criticizes Stirner's concept of human emancipation. For Stirner, Marx wrote, the process of human emancipation means that men have always created a human ideal (i.e., a concept of man) and the amount of freedom that they achieved in any historical epoch was determined by the degree to which they have lived up to this ideal. Criticizing Stirner, Marx wrote: 'In reality, of course, what happened was that people won freedom for themselves each time to the extent that was dictated and permitted not by their ideal of man, but by the existing productive forces. All emancipation carried through hitherto has been based, however, on restricted productive forces. The production which these productive forces could provide was insufficient for the whole of society and made development possible only if some persons satisfied their needs at the expense of others, and therefore some — the minority — obtained the monopoly of development, while others — the majority — owing to the constant struggle to satisfy their most essential needs, were for the time being (i.e. until the creation of new revolutionary productive forces) excluded from any development. Thus, society has hitherto always developed within the framework of a contradiction — in antiquity the contradiction between free men and slaves, in the Middle Ages that between nobility and serfs, in modern times that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This explains, on the one hand, the abnormal, "inhuman" way in which the oppressed class satisfied its needs, and, on the other hand, the narrow limits within which intercourse, and with it the whole ruling class, develops. ...This so-called "inhuman" is just as much a product of present-day relations as the "human" is; it is their negative aspect, the rebellion ... against the prevailing relations brought about by the existing productive forces, and against the way of satisfying needs that corresponds to these relations. The positive expression "human" corresponds to the definite relations *predominant* at a certain stage of production and the way of satisfying needs determined by them, just as the negative expression "inhuman" corresponds to the attempt to negate these predominant relations and the way of satisfying needs prevailing under them without changing the existing mode of production, an attempt that this stage of production daily engenders

afresh.<sup>67</sup> Thus, in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels regarded the 'human' and 'inhuman' not as absolute notions, but historically related to the given mode of production. Within this historical context, however, as Adam Schaff has rightly observed, they are also defined from the point of view of a 'human' protest against 'inhuman' life.<sup>68</sup>

In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels found the historical roots of alienation and thus outlined its origins, the reasons for its development and the conditions for its withering away. Here division of labour and commodity production are regarded as the source of alienated labour. 'The division of labour implies from the outset the division of the *conditions* of labour, of tools and materials, and thus the fragmentation of accumulated capital among different owners, and thus, also, the fragmentation between capital and labour, and the different forms of property itself. The more the division of labour develops and accumulation grows, the further fragmentation develops. Labour itself can only exist on the premise of this fragmentation, ... Thus two facts are here revealed. First the productive forces appear as a world for themselves, quite independent of and divorced from the individuals, alongside the individuals ; the reason for this is that the individuals, whose forces they are, exist split up and in opposition to one another, whilst, on the other hand, these forces are only real forces in the intercourse and association of these individuals. Thus, on the one hand, we have a totality of productive forces, which have, as it were, taken on a material form and are for the individuals themselves no longer the forces of the individuals but of private property, and hence of the individuals only in so far as they are owners of private property. ...On the other hand, standing against these productive forces, we have the majority of the individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away, and who robbed thus of all real life-content, have become abstract individuals, who are, however, by this very fact put into a position to enter into relation with one another *as individuals*.

'Labour, the only connection which still links them with the productive forces and with their own existence, has lost all semblance of self-activity and only sustains their life by stunting it'.<sup>69</sup> Self-activity, and production of material life are separated to such an extent that

material life appears as the end, whereas labour, which produces this material life, as the means. To Marx, material life should be the basis, but not the purpose, of human existence. Labour, instead of being only a means of sustaining life, should be man's creative activity by which to make and mould himself. Labour is not voluntary but forced. Hence, the 'social power, i.e., the multiplied productive force, which arises through the co-operation of different individuals as it is caused by the division of labour, appears to those individuals, since their co-operation is not voluntary but has come about naturally, not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant, which they thus are no longer able to control.'<sup>70</sup> Thus it is the division of labour with all its consequences which is responsible for alienation. This alienation, Marx continues, can only be abolished 'given two practical' premises. In order to become an "unendurable" power, i.e., a power against which men make a revolution, it must necessarily have rendered the great mass of humanity "propertyless", and moreover in contradiction to an existing world of wealth and culture; both those premises presuppose a great increase in productive power, a high degree of its development.<sup>71</sup>

As opposed to alienation Marx draws a picture of unalienated man in communist society : 'as long as a cleavage exists between the particular and the common interest, as long, therefore as activity is not voluntarily, but naturally, divided, man's own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. For as soon as the division of labour comes into being each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood ; whereas in communist society, where nobody has any exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind; without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic.'<sup>72</sup> Marx's views here may sound clearly utopian, especially with more and more technological

development and social division of labour. But the importance of this vision of communist society lies precisely in the fact that the basic postulate in all Marx's works is that communism should ensure to all a full development of their personality. True freedom is possible only through the all-round development of the individual.

**The Grundrisse :** The *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy), written by Marx in 1857-58, constitute a huge collection of economic analyses. Here the concept of alienation, an important aspect of Marx's theory of man, is not 'abandoned' as has been claimed by those who believe in the dichotomy theory. On the contrary, there are a good number of passages dealing with alienation. Marx deals with the problem of alienation in the chapter on money : 'Individuals with an all-round development whose social relations have been subjected to their own collective control as their own collective relations, are not a product of nature but of history. The degree and universality of the development of the capacities [of the productive forces] which makes such individuality possible, presupposes precisely production based on exchange values, which produces, along with generality, the alienation of the individual from himself and others. ...At earlier stages of evolution, the single individual seems to be fuller because he has not yet developed the fullness of his relations and because he has not yet opposed them to himself as social forces and relations which are independent of him'.<sup>78</sup> Thus alienation is to be found not only in the capitalist system. It was also there in the earlier socio-economic formations. In primitive society the individual directly contributes social labour and is harmoniously integrated into his social setting. 'But if he seems "fully developed", as Mandel has justly pointed out, 'this is only because of the extremely limited range of needs that he has become aware of. In reality, the material poverty of society, the helplessness of men before the forces of nature, are sources of alienation, especially social (from man's objective potentialities), ideological, and religious alienation'.<sup>79</sup>

There are also other passages in the *Grundrisse* dealing with the concept of alienation. For example, read this : 'No special intelligence is needed to understand that, given the free labour that had

emerged from serfdom, or wage labour, machines could not effectively be created otherwise than as property which was alienated from them [the workers] and which appeared to them as a hostile power, that is, which was found to confront them as capital'.<sup>75</sup> In still another passage Marx argues that the product of labour appears as capital, which is not merely an exchangeable commodity but 'labour objectified as domination, as the power to dominate living labour'.<sup>76</sup> Thus in the capitalist system there is total subjection of 'living labour' to 'objectified labour' (i. e., dead labour). 'The product of labour is crystallized as an alien power in relation to labour'.<sup>77</sup> Thus living labour 'presents itself as a capacity of labour which is without substance, filled exclusively with needs, confronted with the alienated reality which does not belong to it but to others'.<sup>78</sup> This declamation against labour 'which is without substance, filled exclusively with needs' reminds us of a somewhat similar passage in the *EPM* where analysing the 'species-being' of men, Marx wrote that whereas animals produce one-sidedly man produces universally and even when he is free from physical needs and 'only truly produces in freedom therefrom'. One is also reminded of a passage in *The German Ideology* where Marx argued that under commodity production labour, instead of being a creative activity of man by which to make and mould himself, has been reduced to a mere means of sustaining life.

Thus there are various passages in the *Grundrisse* which speak for themselves. These passages reject the thesis that alienation is a 'pre-Marxist concept' renounced by the 'mature Marx'. The basic fact is : whereas in the *EPM* there was an anthropological approach, in his later works Marx uses the concept of man historically with reference to specific social formations.

**A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy :** Written in 1859 this was Marx's last important critique of political economy before he wrote *Capital*. Here we find the concept of a historical man. In his previous works, as we have already seen (in the *EPM* and in *The German Ideology* for instance), Marx had already shown that man is a producing individual and in this productive activity man co-operates with his fellow men. Here Marx gives an excellent commentary of this exposition. Explaining that the starting point



for analysis of 'material production' is always the producing individual, he emphasizes the point that the individual is always a *social* individual. On the contrary, the starting point of Adam Smith and Ricardo was the solitary and isolated hunter or fisherman. Marx opines that the vision of an isolated individual (*Robinson Crusoe*) could only have come into being in an atomized free-competition society, but once it did come into being it was easily accepted that this had been the natural state of the individual man. Thus what was a product of history was presented as its point of departure. In reality, however, the individual is always a social individual. 'Man is a social animal in the most literal sense : he is not only a social animal, but an animal that can be individualized [ i. e., can develop into an individual ] only within society.'<sup>79</sup>

**Capital :** In Marx's earlier works there are, as we have seen, three interconnected aspects in his theory of man : human essence, human freedom and alienation. In *Capital* the expression 'essence of man', with all its anthropological connotations, is nowhere to be found, and the term 'alienation' does not often occur. This is not to suggest that the basic ideas of his earlier works were abandoned by Marx when he was writing *Capital*.

In the *EPM* Marx argues that one of the basic characteristics of man which distinguishes him from animals is that he produces consciously and also according to laws of beauty. In *Capital* he distinguishes man from the bee in a somewhat similar manner. The bee makes a better honeycomb than the most talented architect could. But the architect is superior to the bee in that he plans before beginning his work. In psychological terms this means, as Adam Schaff pointed out, 'the activity of the bee is instinctive, that of the architect conscious.'<sup>80</sup>

Again, defining the economic and social foundation where all-round development of men is possible, this is what Marx writes about communism in *Capital* : 'a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community.'<sup>81</sup> All this does not mean that there is a continuity in *Capital* of the ahistorical concept of 'human nature' that we find in Marx's articles

in the *Rheinische Zeitung* and the *Deutsch Französische Jahrbücher*. On the contrary, in *Capital* Marx writes about human nature 'as modified in each historical epoch'. In the first volume of *Capital*, criticizing Bentham's theory of utility, Marx wrote : 'To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog-nature. This nature itself is not to be deduced from the principle of utility. Applying this to man, he that would criticize all human acts, movements, relations, etc., by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch.'<sup>89</sup>

In the *Rheinische Zeitung* articles freedom was regarded as the essence of man just as weight is the essence of bodies. There human freedom was treated in Kantian and Fichtean sense, i. e., obedience to the inner law of reason. The implications are clear : man by virtue of his 'rationality' is superior to animals and the essence of man is realized only when man realizes this reason in him by having the freedom to exercise this reason. Thus in his early writings Marx had linked the realm of freedom with the realm of rationality as the distinguishing characteristic of the species 'homo sapien', differentiating man from lower animals. In *Capital* this anthropological tone is replaced by a historical one. Here Marx distinguishes two levels or realms of freedom. The first is bound to necessity in as much as man must work to produce the basic necessities of life. The materials necessary for life must be produced, and this man must do 'in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants ; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase.'<sup>88</sup> Compared with the previous socio-economic formations, capitalism has increased both human wants and the means (productive forces) to satisfy them. Yet in capitalism there is no true freedom because the overwhelming majority, having no control over the means of production, live a hard life of unremitting toil under conditions most unfavourable to human nature. 'Freedom in this field', Marx continues, 'can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature ; and achieving this with the least

expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity.<sup>84</sup> This, then, is the first realm of freedom. The second level of freedom, according to Marx, lies beyond the sphere of actual material production : 'Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite.'<sup>85</sup> The shortening of the working day, however, is possible given two practical premises: first, the productive forces should reach such a development that all the necessities of life can be produced without unremitting toil, and, secondly, each man in society should contribute social labour, i. e., there should be no non-producing possessor class. The first premise shows that the second level of freedom is not separated from the realm of necessity, but is rooted in the labour process; the second premise shows that the struggle for shorter hours of labour is an integral part of the working class struggle against capitalism. And what does this freedom from necessary labour over a wider portion of the day consist of? A plausible answer has been given by Howard Selsam : 'It is reasonable to believe that Marx would include the whole gamut of peaceful human pursuits...from the arts to the sciences, from sports to travel.'<sup>86</sup>

Let us now come to the third aspect of Marx's concept of man : alienation. In *Capital* the term 'alienation' does not often occur. But it is wrong to say that it does not occur at all, and that the author of *Capital* has renounced this concept. Not only the concept but also the term itself is to be found in *Capital*, though as we have already said, rather infrequently. Here are some relevant passages : (i) '...the character of independence and estrangement which the capitalist mode of production as a whole gives to the instruments of labour and to the product, as against the workman, is developed by means of machinery into a thorough antagonism.'<sup>87</sup> (ii) 'Since, before entering on the process, his own labour has already been alienated from himself by the sale of his labour-power, has been appropriated by the capitalist and incorporated with capital, it must, during the process, be realized in a product that does not belong to him.'<sup>88</sup> (iii) 'Thus grows the power of capital, the alienation of the

conditions of social production personified in the capitalist from the real producers. Capital comes more and more to the fore as a social power, whose agent is the capitalist. This social power no longer stands in any possible relation to that which the labour of a single individual can create. It becomes an alienated, independent, social power, which stands opposed to society as an object, and as an object that is the capitalist's source of power.'<sup>99</sup>

There are also passages in *Capital* where, without using the term, the concept of alienation and the phenomena it embraces are presented. The final section of Chapter I of Volume I of *Capital*, entitled 'Fetishism of Commodities' reminds its readers of the concept of alienation as found in *EPM*. In the case of commodities there 'is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities. This fetishism of commodities has its origin. ... in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them.'<sup>100</sup>

As early as 1842 Marx used the word 'fetish' while writing an article on 'Thefts of timber' in Rhineland. In that article Marx wrote that as gold was the fetish of the Spaniards, wood was the fetish of the Rhinelanders. By 'fetish' he meant a secret domination of dead things on the living individuals. Hence, Norman Geras is correct when he says that domination is an important aspect of fetishism; and to regard the concept of fetishism as entirely unrelated to that of alienation is to neglect a vital aspect of fetishism, namely that men are dominated by their own products.<sup>91</sup> That the concept of fetishism is related to that of alienation is further reflected in Marx's analogy with religion. As we have already seen in religious alienation, as in all other forms of alienation, two 'vital' things are involved: deformation of consciousness and the appearance of an

intermediary. Both these are to be found in the concept of fetishism. Just as in religion 'the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life', so it is in the case of commodity production. In exchanging commodities for money men come to believe that their own potentialities and efforts do not belong to them but are embodied in the objects they have created ; and thus men are victims of the deformation of consciousness. Again, while discussing the concept of fetishism in *Capital* Marx brings in the notion of an intermediary when he says that commodity appears as a mediator between man and man. In 'On the Jewish Question' Marx, while drawing an analogy between political alienation and religious alienation, wrote that just as religion is the indirect recognition of man through a mediator, the liberal state is the mediator between man and his freedom.

Thus we find that three important aspects of alienation are also present in the concept of fetishism : domination, deformation of consciousness and appearance of an intermediary. Hence the concept of fetishism of commodities is linked with the concept of alienation. But in *Capital* it is a historical concept of alienation. Here the roots of alienation are located in specific social relations in specific historical context. On the contrary, in the *EPM* alienation is regarded basically as the negation of man's 'species being'. This difference is to be understood in terms of Mark's intellectual development from an essentialist anthropological approach in the *EPM* and earlier writings to a historical materialist approach.

One of the most contemporary advocates of the 'dichotomy thesis' albeit in a modified form, is John Mepham. In *Issues in Marxist Philosophy* Mepham argues that fetishism 'is linked with concept of the socialization of labour and its various forms, and with the analysis of the value-form, money and the commodity ... it does not designate, as does the concept of alienation, some generalized dehumanization of man, but refers to the specific effects of the capitalist relations of production on the ways in which social life tends to be represented.'<sup>10</sup> It is true indeed that whereas the concept of alienation is based on an anthropological theory of the essence of man, the concept of fetishism is based on a scientific theory of history and it 'refers to the specific effects of the capitalist relations of production'.

To Mepham, the concept of fetishism is 'ambiguous' : it can be read either as 'rooted in the problematic of Marx's critique of political economy' or as a part of a theory 'of the production of misleading representations ... secreted by bourgeois society'.<sup>98</sup> It is difficult, says Mepham, to reconcile these two interpretations since the first regards fetishism as a concept rooted in a critique of a specific theoretical ideology, that of political economy, whereas the second interpretation regards it as part of a general theory of ideology. Hence, Mepham asserts, instead of 'endorsing' the concept of fetishism, it should be subjected to criticism. Ambiguity or no ambiguity, the fact remains, however, that in this concept of fetishism, the three important aspects of alienation (viz. domination, deformation of consciousness and the appearance of an intermediary) are present. However, in *EPM*, as we have repeatedly emphasized, there are also other aspects of alienation, e.g. alienation from species-being which are not to be found in the concept of fetishism.

Thus, from all that has been said in the foregoing discussion, it is possible to comprehend the evolution of Marx's concept of man. In writings before the *EPM* the concept of man was purely anthropological, in writings after the *EPM* we find a historical concept of man, and in the *EPM* we find an incoherent fusion of the anthropological and the historical approaches. Whereas in earlier writings the theory of man was Marx's conceptual framework with which to understand history and politics, in writings after the *EPM* historical materialism was Marx's tool with which to understand men and their social relations. In this sense there was a 'break' no doubt, but this break was not a total rupture. 'Mature Marx' did not abandon all the basic ideas of 'young Marx', but, since 1845, he analysed them in a more scientific and objective manner. There is a theory of man in the *EPM* as well as in *Capital* and the differences to be found are to be understood in terms of the intellectual development of Marx. A comprehensive treatment of Marx's concept of man by tracing its evolution from the *Rheinische Zeitung* articles to *Capital* is important and necessary to show that Marx, while emphasizing disciplined action of associated producers, did not dream of a communism where man will be treated merely as a part of productive machine and living a mechanical and regimented life where each individual is coerced by the collectivity. What Marx wanted, in fact, was the

establishment of a human society where each individual can freely develop his potentialities. This is the basic motivation in all Marx's works, young or mature, and this motivation acts as a bridge between Marx's 'early works' and 'later works'.

And, finally, a note of caution : the importance of Marx's concept of man notwithstanding, to assert repeatedly at this critical historical conjuncture that all other aspects of Marxism are subordinate to his concept of man is, from both strategic and tactical points, not a very wise thing to do. In fact, the theory of class struggle and revolutionary praxis becomes more important and dominant in a decadent capitalist system. Hence the concept of man as a member of a particular class in a specific social formation is to be emphasized not as the 'central concept' but as a concept to enhance revolutionary praxis.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. For a better treatment of this problem, namely the impact of the French Revolution on German Philosophy, see Garaudy; R. Karl Marx: *The Evolution of His Thought* (New York : International Publishers, 1967).
2. Quoted in Hook; S., *From Hegel to Marx* (London : Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1936), p. 224.
3. Chamberlain; W. B.: *Heaven Wasn't His Destination* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1941), pp. 42-3.
4. ibid, p.43. A good English translation of Feuerbach's *Das Wesen Des Christenthums* is made by Marian Evans, better known as George Eliot.
- 5.. ibid, p. 52.
6. Garaudy, R.; op. cit. p: 27.
7. Chamberlain; W.; op. cit. p. 79.
- 8: ibid, p.163.
9. Quoted in Hook; S. op. cit. p: 252.
10. Garaudy, R.; op. cit. p. 27.
11. Engels, F.; *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, in Marx-Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow : Progress, 1977) vol. 3, p. 344.
12. In an enthusiastic letter to Rüge, Marx wrote: "The only point in Feuerbach's aphorisms that does not satisfy me is that he gives too much importance to nature and too little to politics", Quoted in McLellan, D. *Marx Before Marxism* (London : Macmillan, 1980), p. 197.

13. 'Hook, S., op. cit., p. 253.
14. Marx, K.—Engels, F., *Collected Works* (Moscow : Progress, 1975) vol. 1, p. 73.
15. *ibid*, p. 104.
16. *ibid*, p. 30.
17. Oizerman, T. I., *The Making of the Marxist Philosophy* (Moscow : Progress, 1981), pp. 58-9.
18. Marx-Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 151.
19. *ibid*, p. 155.
20. *ibid*, p. 158.
21. *ibid*, pp. 161-2.
22. *ibid*, p. 199.
23. Althusser, L., *For Marx* (London : Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1969), p. 224.
24. Marx-Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 202.
25. McLellan, D., op. cit., p. 96.
26. McLellan, D., *Karl Marx : His Life and Thought* (London : Macmillan, 1977) pp. 69-70.
27. Marx-Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 29.
28. *ibid*, p. 144. By 'dogmas' here Marx refers to the Communism of Fourier, Cabet, etc.
29. *ibid*, p. 152.
30. *ibid*, p. 162.
31. *idem*.
32. *idem*.
33. *idem*.
34. *ibid*, p. 168.
35. *ibid*, p. 175.
36. *Ibid*, p. 182.
37. Meszaros, I., *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (London : Merlin Press, 1982), p. 75.
38. Althusser, L. op. cit., p. 226.
39. Marx-Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 187.
40. Swingewood, A., *Marx and Modern Social Theory* (London : Macmillan, 1979) p. 111.

41. Mandel, E., *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx* (London : NLB, 1977), p. 158. Mandel's position vis-a-vis the 'young Marx-old Marx' debate is based on his analysis of Marx's theory of alienation. Mandel regards the *EPM* as a work of transition only with reference to 'alienation', which, of course, is a vital aspect of Marx's concept of man. In fact, the *EPM* is a transition from an essentialist anthropological concept of man to a historical materialist concept.
42. Marx, K., *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow : Progress, 1977), pp. 67-8.
43. *ibid.*, p. 68.
44. *idem*.
45. *ibid*, p. 71.
46. *ibid*, p. 74.
47. *ibid*, p. 73.
48. *ibid*, p. 78
49. *ibid*, pp. 96-7.
50. *ibid*, p. 98.
51. *ibid*, pp. 18-9.
52. Fromm, E., *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York : Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963), p. 51.
53. *ibid*, p. 25.
54. Quoted in Schaff, A., *Marxism and the Human Individual* (New York ; McGraw Hill, 1970) p. 10.
55. Althusser, L., *op. cit.*, p. 239.
56. *ibid*, p. 33.
57. *idem*.
58. Marx, K. *Theses on Feuerbach*, in *Addenda, The German Ideology* (Moscow : Progress, 1976), p. 615.
59. *idem*.
60. Oizerman, T. I. *op. cit.*, p. 346.
61. Marx, K. *Theses on Feuerbach*, *op. cit.*, pp. 615-6.
62. *idem*.
63. *idem*.
64. *idem*.
65. *idem*.
66. Marx, K. and Engels, F, *The German Ideology*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
67. *ibid*, p. 457.

68. Schaff, A. op. cit., p. 185.
69. Marx, K. and Engels, F. *The German Ideology*, op. cit., pp. 95-6.
70. ibid, pp. 53-4.
71. idem.
72. idem.
73. Quoted in Mandel, E. op. cit., p. 178.
74. ibid, p. 180.
75. ibid, p. 179.
76. idem.
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79. Marx, K. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Moscow Progress, 1977), pp. 188-9.
80. Schaff, A. op. cit., p. 76.
81. Marx, K. *Capital* (Moscow : Progress, 1977), vol. 1, pp. 82-3.
82. ibid, p. 571.
83. ibid, vol. 3, p. 820.
84. idem.
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86. Selsam, H., *Socialism and Ethics* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1947) p. 202.
87. Marx, K. op. cit, vol. 1, p. 407.
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91. Geras, N., 'Marx and the Critique of Political Economy', in Blackburn, R. (ed.), *Ideology in Social Science* (Glasgow : William Collins, 1979), p. 289.
92. Mepham, J. 'From the *Grundrisse* to *Capital* : The Making of Marx's Method' in Mepham and Ruben (eds.), *Issues in Marxist Philosophy* (Sussex : Hvester Press, 1979), vol. 1, p. 157.
93. idem.

## A L T H U S S E R ' S M A R X I S M

DEBESH ROYCHOWDHURY\*

Three years after the publication of *For Marx* in French in 1966 as a collection of papers published in different journals from 1960 to 1965 Andrew Levine wrote : 'For some years a debate has been raging throughout the European left, particularly in France, over the work of Louis Althusser . ' because in the first place, Althusser does 'provide a theoretical insight of the greatest importance for informing the kind of thinking out of which strategy and tactics, and question of political organization, can be fruitfully discussed' and secondly because 'Althusser's reading of Marx represents the first major contribution to Marxist theory to emerge free from the stultifying influence of the dogmatism, characteristic, especially, of the Moscow-oriented parties'.<sup>1</sup> And by now 'Althusserian "marxism" has become a perfect ideology for left academician's in Europe. Not only that, various concepts and structures of Althusser's thought have constituted the corpus of the works of some radical Marxists irrespective of their being critics or protagonists of Althusserian thought.

Thus the storm of dust raised by the debate over Althusser's interpretation of Marxism is almost over ; many evaluations have been poured in, many of which have been discarded and removed ; as a result many things have now become visible and as such, the time has come to make an endeavour for a clearer understanding of Althusser's analysis of Marxism.<sup>2</sup>

### Question of Method

But what method should be adopted for the analysis and understanding of Althusser's interpretation of Marxism other than the Marxian one ? In fact, Althusser has claimed to have done the same when he has analysed Marxism as he asserts 'the *Marxist theoretical*

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*concepts* in which the reality of theoretical formations in general (philosophical ideologies and science) can be considered must be applied to Marx himself'.<sup>4</sup> He has not only tried to make a Marxian analysis of Marxism but has also made a brief endeavour to apply the same method to himself and his writings and thus put himself and his writings in a particular ideological theoretical conjuncture, perhaps, situated existentially at a particular moment in the process of history, because Althusser considers these papers to be documentation of a particular history.<sup>5</sup> And he has made his mind clear by asserting that 'to understand these essays (included in *For Marx*) and to pass judgement on them, it is essential to realize that they are conceived, written and published by a Communist philosopher in a particular ideological and theoretical conjuncture'.<sup>6</sup>

So it is perhaps better to accept Althusser's suggestion for understanding him and his writings.<sup>7</sup> As Althusser asserts, he, as a communist philosopher, has published the essays included in *For Marx* 'in a particular theoretical and ideological conjuncture' not only as an erudite speculative investigation but simultaneously as intervention in a definite conjuncture.<sup>8</sup> It is, therefore, essential to understand that conjuncture. At the national political level this conjuncture encompasses the 'conjuncture in the French Communist Party' and at the international political level the 'ideological and theoretical conjuncture in the international communist movement' existing in those years. Although the essays of *For Marx* do not deal with political elements of the conjuncture but, as Althusser asserts, 'with ideological theoretical problems present' in and produced by that conjuncture. The recent element of this conjuncture was Stalin's death and rupture of the Sino-Soviet relation. The abrupt and violent denunciation of the 'cult of personality' and the 'Stalinist dogmatism', in Althusser's view, 'gave birth to a profound ideological reaction, "liberal" and "ethical" in tendency', and granted freedom to those who have made the early works of Marx a 'war horse for petty-bourgeois intellectuals' since 1930s to advocate 'Marxist humanism' which has secured a place inside the Soviet and the Western Communist Parties. This ideological reaction is said to have gained momentum from the support of certain political slogans of the Twenty Second Congress of the C P S U which denied class struggle in the USSR. On the other hand, this ideological

reaction is said to have led the Western Communist Parties to solicit unity with such reactionary elements as socialist democrats and catholics and profess ‘peaceful transition to socialism’.<sup>9</sup> It is for this reason that Althusser has considered the current ‘inflation of the themes of Marxist or socialist “Humanism” as an *ideological phenomenon*’ and ‘criticized the *theoretical effects* of ideology, which are always a threat or a hindrance to scientific knowledge’, and an ‘encroachment on Marxist theory’ that make us unable to understand ‘the specificity of Marxist theory’ and confuse ‘it with the pre-Marxist ideological interpretations’. This, in his opinion, is an ‘inability to resolve the (basically *political* and *economic*) problems posed by the conjuncture since the Twentieth Congress, and a danger of masking these problems with the false “solution” of some merely ideological formulae’.<sup>10</sup>

#### The Conditioning Conjuncture : Importance of the Ideology - Science Opposition

As the above perspective based on Althusser’s self-analysis is not kept in mind by most critics of Althusser, ‘Althusser has been misconstrued as a capitulator to positivism in the realm of theory and as an unreconstructed Stalinist in the realm of politics for his attacks on the humanist disavowal of Stalin that developed within the Communist movement after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU.<sup>11</sup> Thus Althusser’s writings not only are conditioned by the theoretical and ideological conjunctures existing at that time and immediately before that time but also constitute an intervention in those conjunctures ‘in reaction to its dangerous tendencies’ (which are ideological in nature). And it has to be noted that it is an intervention on two fronts—the first one being the line of demarcation between ‘Marxist theory in the revolutionary class struggle’ and ‘ideological tendencies foreign to Marxism’ ‘situated essentially in the terrain of the confrontation between Marx and Hegel’, and the second one being the line of demarcation between the ‘true theoretical bases of the Marxist science of history and Marxist philosophy and the pre-Marxist idealist motions on which depend contemporary interpretations of Marxism as “philosophy of man” or a “humanism”’. But as Althusser asserts ‘these two interventions reveal a major opposition’, the opposition that ‘separates science from

ideology'<sup>12</sup> Thus Althusser's interpretation of the Marxian concept of ideology and science and his notion of a dichotomous relation between them may be considered to be crucial and as such the correctness of Althusser's interpretation and exposition of these two concepts and their interrelation have to be examined at first if one is to understand the 'ideological theoretical problem present in and produced by that conjuncture' which has conditioned all the writings of Althusser and impelled him to make intervention in that conjuncture. The rest of this paper attempts such an examination.

### Ideology and the Structure of Social Formation

As a first step towards understanding ideology the meaning or meanings and the role and place of ideology in social formation, as elucidated by Althusser in his different writings, may be analysed. Though not as explicit as it is in his essay entitled 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' written in 1969 ideology has been conceived by Althusser (in *For Marx*) as a level situated in the superstructure, the forces of production and the relations of production or the mode of production constituting the base or the structure. 'The relation between *determinant instances* in the structure-superstructure complex ... constitutes the essence of any social formation.' In Althusser's opinion Marx has given us the 'two ends of a chain' the '*determination in the last instance by the (economic) mode of production*' on the one hand, '*the relative autonomy of the superstructures and their specific effectivity*' on the other. Elsewhere in this book Althusser has made an attempt 'to find out what goes on between' these two ends. In order to explain 'what goes on' between structure and superstructures Althusser takes the clue from Engel's analysis made in his famous letter to Bloch (of 21 September 1880). And Althusser himself admits this: 'it is sufficient to retain from him [i.e. from Engels] what should be called the *accumulation of effective determinations* (deriving from the superstructures and from special national and international circumstances) *on the determination in the last instance by the economic*. It seems to me that this clarifies the expression *overdetermined contradiction*, which I have put forward ...' 'This *overdetermination*' in his opinion, becomes 'inevitable and thinkable as soon as the real existence of the forms of the superstructure and of the national and international conjuncture has

been recognized ... [as] largely specific and autonomous, and therefore irreducible to a pure *phenomenon*' and that 'the economic dialectic is never active in the *pure state*'. Thus 'the *overdetermination of any contradiction and of any constitutive element of a society*' ... means : (1) that a revolution in the *structure* does not *ipso facto* modify the existing superstructures and particularly the *ideologies* at one blow ... for they have sufficient of their own consistency to *survive beyond their immediate life context*, even to recreate, to "secrete" substitute conditions of existence temporarily ; (2) that the new society produced by the Revolution may itself *ensure the survival, that is, the reactivation, of older elements* through both the forms of the new superstructures and specific (national and international) "circumstances".<sup>13</sup>

### Uneven Development of Contradictions

In the same book Althusser has made a further sophistication of his conceptual framework. Following Marks's assertion [that 'simplest economic category ... can only ever exist as the unilateral and abstract relation of a pre-given, living concrete whole...'] in his Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy*, he has conceived the mode of production of the structure of social formation as 'pre-given complex structured whole'. As the dialectics is 'the doctrine of the unity of opposites' it visualizes, in Althusser's view, a structure encompassing different substructures of contradictions having different respective specificities situated at different levels of the structure. And then following Lenin (his *Philosophical Notebooks*) and Mao (his *On Contradiction*) Althusser has introduced three different concepts of which two are concepts of distinction : (1) 'the distinction between *principal contradiction* and the secondary contradictions and the distinction between *principal aspect* and the secondary *aspect* of each of contradiction : The last concept is the '*uneven development of contradiction*'.<sup>14</sup> Again, his system like that of Mao presupposes the existence of several contradictions involved in a process making the process a complex one. Many more contradictions may originate in this process of development one of which will be principal. And within each contradiction of such complex system plurality of contradictions or contradictory aspects has been assumed which makes the process a complex one. One of

these contradictory aspects of a contradiction is regarded as principal and others as secondary.<sup>15</sup>

Althusser develops his concept of uneven development of contradictions within a structure and uneven development of contradictory aspects of each of such contradictions taking the clue from Marx's observation : 'The only point difficult to grasp, here, is how production relations stand in uneven development to legal relations...' [found in Marx's Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy*.] He then generalizes such unevenness depending on Mao's statement : 'Nothing in this World develops absolutely evenly'. As regards its other implications Althusser states : if the principal contradiction dominates over other contradictions or if the principal aspect of a contradiction dominates over the secondary ones then this makes the social whole a complex one. 'That one contradiction dominates the others', in his view, 'presupposes that the complexity in which it features is a structured unity, and that this structure implies the indicated domination-subordination relations between the contradictions'. 'Domination', in his opinion, 'is not just an indifferent fact, it is a fact *essential* to the complexity itself.' Thus this 'complexity implies domination as one of its essentials : it is inscribed in its structure.' The unity discussed by Marxism 'is the unity of the complexity itself,' meaning thereby 'that the mode of organization and articulation of the complexity is precisely what constitutes its unity'; that 'the complex whole has the unity of a structure articulated in dominance'.<sup>16</sup>

### Concept of Overdetermination

'If every contradiction is a contradiction in a complex whole structured in dominance', then in Althusser's opinion, 'this complex whole cannot be envisaged without its contradictions, without their basically uneven relations'. In other words, 'each contradiction, each essential articulation of the structure, and the general relation of the articulations in the structure in dominance, constitute so many conditions of the existence of the complex whole itself.' 'In plain terms', as Althusser clarifies, 'this position implies that the "secondary" contradictions are not the pure phenomena of the "principal" contradiction, that the principal is not the essence and

the secondaries so many of its phenomena, so much so that the principal contradiction might practically exist *without* the secondary contradictions, or without some of them, or might exist *before* or *after* them. On the contrary, it implies that the secondary contradictions are essential even to the existence of the principal contradiction, that they really constitute its condition of existence just as the principal contradiction constitutes their conditions of existence'. Giving concrete example Althusser observes, 'take the complex structured whole that is society. In it the "relations of production" are not the pure phenomena of the forces of production; they are also their condition of existence. The superstructure is not the pure phenomenon of the structure, it is also its condition of existence'. But 'this mutual conditioning of the existence of the "contradictions" does not nullify the structure in dominance that reigns over the contradictions and in them (in this case the determination in the last instance by the economy) ... and constitutes the complexity of the whole and its unity. These are the characteristics of Marxist dialectic, *the differentia specifica*, that Althusser has "tried ... to encapsulate in the concept of "overdetermination."<sup>17</sup>

### Concept of Structural Causality

But in order to specify and clarify the causal role of the structure in dominance more suitably Althusser in his *Reading Capital*, has borrowed the concept of metonymic causality from Jacques-Alan Miller and based the same on Marx's concept of "*Darstellung*" and calls it structural causality. This structural causality, in his view, 'implies that the structure is immanent in its effects, a cause immanent in its effects, in the Spinozist sense of the term, that *the whole existence, of the structure consists in its effects*, in short the structure, which is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements, is nothing outside its effects'. Althusser also admits that the same phenomena, he now accounts for with the help of the concepts of structural causality, as he 'previously attempted to account for ... with the concept of *overdetermination*'.<sup>18</sup>

### Disposition of Roles in Constant Structure

In Althusser's opinion such 'contradiction can no longer be univocal (categories, can no longer have a role and meaning fixed

once for all) since it reflects in itself, in its very essence, its relation to unevenness of the complex whole. Althusser further explains : 'if the structure in dominance remains constant, the disposition of the roles within it changes ; the principal contradiction becomes a secondary one, a secondary contradiction takes its place, the principal aspect becomes a secondary one, the secondary aspect becomes the principal one. There is always one principal contradiction and secondary ones, but they exchange their roles in the structure articulated in dominance while the latter remains stable ... But this principal contradiction produced by *displacement* only becomes "decisive", explosive, by condensation (by "fusion") ... it is the latter which occupies the strategic nodal position that must be attacked in order to produce "*the dissolution of (the existing) unity*".<sup>17</sup> The successions of dominations are not arbitrary for 'each one constitutes one stage in a complex process (the basis for the "periodization" of history)".<sup>18</sup>

In Althusser's view 'Marxist theory and practice do not only approach unevenness in the form of simple exteriority (the *reciprocal action* of infrastructure and superstructure) but in a form organically *internal* to each instance of the social totality, to each contradiction'. Again, 'it is economism that identifies eternally in advance the determinant-contradiction-in-the-last-instance with the *role* of the dominant contradiction, which for ever assimilates such and such an "aspect" (forces of production, economy, practice) to the principal *role*, and such and such another "aspect" (relations of production, politics, ideology, theory) to the secondary *role*—whereas in real history determination in the last instance by the economy is exercised precisely in the permutation of the principal role between economy, politics, theory etc.'<sup>19</sup>

### Motor Role of Contradiction

The last point of this analysis is the elucidation of the *motor* role of contradiction in the development of a process. In Marxist theory 'to say that contradiction is a motive force is to say that it implies a *real struggle, real confrontations, precisely located within the structure of the complex whole* ; it is to say that the locus of confrontation may vary according to the relation of the contradictions

in the structure in dominance in any given situation ; it is to say that the *condensation* of the struggle in a strategic locus is inseparable from the *displacement* of the dominant among these contradictions ; that the organic phenomena of *condensation* and displacement are the very existence of the "identity of opposites" until they produce the globally visible form of the *mutation* or qualitative leap that sanctions the revolutionary situation when the whole is recrystallized'. The distinct moments of this process are : 'non-antagonism' (that stands for the *dominant form of displacement* or 'metonymic' form as enshrined in the phrase 'quantitative change'); 'antagonism' that stands for the '*dominant form of condensation*' or *acute* class conflict in the case of society, theoretical crisis in a science and 'explosion' ( that stands for revolutionary explosion in society and in theory).<sup>21</sup>

#### **Essentiality of Ideology : its Nature and Role**

What emerges from the above lengthy placement of Althusser's view is the role and significance of ideology as an instance or level in the superstructure of the structure-superstructure format that constitutes the social formation. As an instance or level in the structure-superstructure complex, ideology, therefore, possesses the properties which are specific to it and has the power or effectivity to determine other levels including the economic.<sup>22</sup> Thus ideology, in Althusser's analysis, appears to be 'concomitant with social formation' and in his opinion, '(h)uman societies secrete ideology as the very element and atmosphere indispensable to their historical respiration and life .... So ... it is a structure essential to the historical life of societies.<sup>23</sup> Althusser has also demonstrated how ideology helps the ruling class to live its own class rule that masks the act of exploitation and thus wins the common exploited people to its side :

'When, during the eighteenth century, the "rising class", the bourgeoisie, developed a humanist ideology of equality, freedom and reason, it gave its own demands the form of universality, since it hoped thereby to enroll at its side,... the very men it would liberate only for their exploitation. ... Thus, in a very exact sense, the bourgeoisie *lives* in the ideology of *freedom* the relation between it and its conditions of existence : that is

*its real relation (the law of liberal capitalist economy) but invested in an imaginary relation (all men are free, including the free labourers). Its ideology consists of this play on the word freedom, which betrays the bourgeois wish to mystify those ("freemen"!) it exploits, blackmailing them with freedom so as to keep them in harness, as much as the bourgeoisie's need to live its own class rule as the freedom of those it is exploiting".<sup>24</sup>*

Thus in and through the ideology, as a system of representations, myths, images and concepts, 'men do indeed express, not the real relation between them and their conditions of existence, but the way they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence,' but 'this supposes both a real relation and an *imaginary lived relation*'. Thus 'it is not a simple relation but a relation between relations, a second degree relation'. And 'as structures' that it affects people 'not via their consciousness' but '*as an object of their "world"*'.<sup>25</sup>

### Ideological State Apparatuses : its Functions

The essentiality of ideology as structure to the production and reproduction of the relations and forces of production has been indicated by Althusser in an original fashion following Gramsci in his famous essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'. By way of explaining what Althusser means by 'Ideological State Apparatuses' he observes : 'I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions'. The following are these apparatuses ( ISA as abbreviated ) : the religious ISA (the system of different Churches), the educational ISA (the system of different public and private 'Schools'), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system including different Parties ), the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio, television, etc.), the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, Sports, etc.).<sup>26</sup>

Althusser significantly asserts that the Ideological State Apparatuses 'largely secure the reproduction specifically of the relations of production, behind a "shield" provided by the repressive State apparatus' operating under the dominant legitimizing cover

of the ruling ideology. Thus in Althusser's language it 'is the intermediation of the ruling ideology that ensures ... "harmony" between the repressive State apparatus and Ideological State Apparatuses, and between the different State Ideological Apparatuses'. It is for this reason that the educational 'ideological State apparatus ... has been installed in the dominant position in mature capitalist social formations as a result of a violent, political and ideological class struggle ...' and this position is maintained against 'the resistance of the exploited classes, [ who find ] ... means and occasions to express itself there, either, by utilization of their contradictions, or by conquering combat positions in them in struggle'.<sup>27</sup> Thus he exposes the essential links of ideology in class society not only with the reproduction of the relations of production, but with exploitation, class-domination, class-struggle and state-power also.

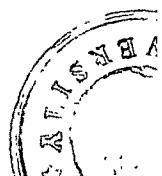
### Ideology Making Men Feel as Subjects

Although individuals 'live in ideology, i.e. in a determinate (religious, ethical etc.) representation of the world whose imaginary distortion depends on their imaginary relation to their conditions of existence, ... in the last instance, to the relations of production and to class relations' this 'imaginary relation', as Althusser asserts, 'is itself endowed with a material existence'. And making it further clear he observes : 'an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices'. These 'practices are governed by the *rituals* in which these practice are inscribed, within the *material existence of an ideological apparatus*, be it ... small mass in a small church, a funeral, a minor match at a sport's club, a school day, a political party meeting, etc.'<sup>28</sup> And to 'function in the practical rituals' of such types is to recognize that we are subjects. In this way '*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*' as Althusser asserts finally.<sup>29</sup> He, then, indicates that 'the individual is *interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection.*' And this has to be so if people are to "work all by themselves", or in other words, 'it has to be so ... if the reproduction of the relations of production is to be assured, even in the processes of production and circulation, every

day, in the "consciousness", i.e. in the attitudes of the individual-subjects occupying posts which the socio-technical division of labour assigns to them in production, exploitation, repression, ideolization, scientific practice etc'.<sup>80</sup>

Linking ISAs with class struggle more meaningfully Althusser observes that 'the ISAs represent the *form* in which the ideology of the ruling class must *necessarily* be realized, and the form in which the ideology of the ruled class must *necessarily* be measured and confronted, ideologies are not "born" in the ISAs but from the social classes at grips in the class struggle : from their conditions of existence, their practices, their experience of the struggle etc.' Thus, 'the State and its Apparatuses only have meaning from the point of view of the class struggle, as an apparatus of class struggle ensuring class oppression and guaranteeing the conditions of exploitation and its reproduction'.<sup>81</sup>

If 'to recognize that we are subjects' is to 'function in the practical rituals of the most elementary every day life' which 'gives us the "consciousness" of our incessant (eternal) practice of ideological recognition — its consciousness, i.e. its *recognition*' then how are we to free ourselves from the grip of ideology, that helps exploitations and the reproduction of the conditions of exploitation ? Althusser answers that this can be done only by obtaining 'the (scientific) knowledge of the mechanism of this (ideological) recognition'. And he further asserts that 'it is this knowledge that we have to reach ... while speaking in ideology, and from within ideology we have to outline a discourse which tries to break with ideology', from within ideology, because 'ideology *has no outside* (for itself)'. Those who do not possess this 'scientific knowledge' 'believe themselves by definition outside ideology' because 'one of the effects of ideology is the practical *denegation* of the ideological character of ideology by ideology'. 'It is', in his opinion, 'necessary to be outside ideology, i.e. in scientific knowledge, to be able to say : I am in ideology ... or ... I was in ideology'. But no one can say so because 'the accusation of being in ideology only applies to others, never to oneself (unless one is really a Spinozist or a Marxist, which, in this matter, is exactly the same thing)'.<sup>82</sup>



### Science – Ideology Distinction

Leaving aside the Spinozist position that entails controversy<sup>83</sup> it may be presumed that Marxists might have in possession that scientific knowledge of the mechanism of ideological recognition which they have outlined in its beginning within ideology but later developed to break with ideology i.e. to be in the scientific knowledge. Thus it is evident that in Althusser's opinion, although scientific knowledge is essential for the exposition of the mechanism of mystificatory ideological recognition, such knowledge must be different from ideology because, in his opinion the latter '*is nothing but outside* (for science and for reality)'.<sup>84</sup> Since the beginning of his investigation in Marxist theory Althusser has been distinguishing between science, meaning thereby mainly the Marxist science of history, and ideology that 'besieged science' and "threatened the understanding of positive things" and he has declared that the mission of his theory is 'to distinguish science from ideology'.<sup>85</sup> In this respect he still sticks to his old theoretical position.<sup>86</sup> One thing which has to be remembered in this connexion is that although Althusser has tried to distinguish between ideology in general and ideologies in particular and outline a theory of the former but ultimately he could do neither quite successfully.<sup>87</sup> What is more to take note of is that he has assumed the existence and necessity of ideology in communist society also. He thus observes : *historical materialism cannot conceive that even a communist society could ever do without ideology*.<sup>88</sup> He then goes beyond communist society and remarks that 'ideology is eternal'.<sup>89</sup> Thus Althusser's distinction-separation or break between Marxist science of history and ideology also mean a distinction-separation or break between the former and the Marxian ideology or Marxism as ideology. Though Althusser has not used such expression as Marxism as ideology or Marxian ideology his assumption of ideology in communist society or the following expression means that :

The class positions in confrontation in the class struggle are "*represented*" in the domain of practical ideologies...by *world outlooks* of antagonistic tendencies : in the last instance idealist (bourgeois) and materialist (proletarian).<sup>90</sup>

### Distinction in Respect of Function

Of the ideology-science distinction ideological pole—its role, meaning and significance—has been analysed and explained first following Althusser. The analysis of the other pole, that is, science may be taken up by way of differentiating ideology from science particularly Marxist science of history. In his first book, namely, *For Marx* Althusser has distinguished ideology from science in the following manner :

We can say that ideology ... is distinguished from science in that in it the practico-social function is more important than the theoretical function (function as knowledge).<sup>41</sup>

The preceding analysis of ideology—its role, function and meaning—as elucidated by Althusser amply indicates its practico-social function.

Ideology also differs from scientific knowledge (which includes the knowledge provided by Marxist theory of history) in that ‘the Theory of existing theoretical practice (of the sciences),... transforms into “knowledges” (scientific truths) the ideological product of existing “empirical” practices (the concrete activity of men)’. This ‘Theory is,’ in Althusser’s opinion, ‘the materialist dialectic’. This theory of theoretical practice has been called by Althusser ‘Generality II constituted by the corpus of concepts’; the knowledge or scientific truth is said to be the ‘Generality III’, and the ideological product prior to its being transformed into knowledge is called the Generality I. Thus there is a qualitative difference between the Generality I, which remains deeply impregnated by ideology as a basic practice essential to the existence of the social whole, and the Generality III. It is Generality II or the Theory of theoretical (scientific practice that removes all ideological elements that impregnate the Generality I, and create Generality III or scientific knowledge through radical transformation.<sup>42</sup> Thus not a grain of ideology can remain in scientific knowledge – such is their relation or an absence of relation, a negative relation.

### Distinction : Correspondence or Non-correspondence to Reality

The third difference between ideology and science, in Althusser's opinion, is that while ideology implies a relation between real relations, a second degree relation although it is imaginary, distorted or inverted one, the logical order of scientific knowledge has no correspondence with the real order. As Althusser observes, 'the distinction between real object and the object of knowledge implies the disappearance of the ideological (empiricist or absolute-idealist) myth of a one-to-one correspondence between the terms of these two orders, ... even an inverted one, of one-to-one correspondence between the terms of these two orders : for an inverted correspondence is still a term by term correspondence according to a common order ...'.<sup>48</sup>

In Althusser's view 'the *concrete-in-thought* ... is a knowledge' produced by theoretical practice that 'all takes place "within knowledge"', and 'the concrete-reality ... is its object'.<sup>49</sup> This same view as expressed in *For Marx* has been reiterated in *Reading Capital* where he observes that it 'is precisely ... this articulated-thought-totality which has to be produced in knowledge as an object of knowledge in order to reach a knowledge ... of the real articulated totality which constitutes the existence of bourgeois society'.<sup>50</sup> Thus Althusser admits that the purpose for which the object of knowledge is produced in knowledge is 'to reach a knowledge of the real articulated totality' or the real world. Thus 'the process of production of knowledges which, *despite*, or *because* of the fact that it takes place *entirely in thought* ... , nevertheless provides that grasp (of the concept : *Begriff*) on the *real* world (is) called its appropriation', 'a specific mode of appropriation'. This, in his opinion, 'poses precisely the problem of the way this function works, and therefore of the mechanism that ensures it : this function of the appropriation of the real world by knowledge,' or 'the cognitive appropriation of the real object'. But the question of this mode of appropriation has to be posed, in his opinion, in terms which exclude any recourse to the ideological solution contained in the ideological characters, subject and object, or to the mutual mirror-recognition structure, in the closed circle they move'.<sup>51</sup> Thus even in the cognitive appropriation of the real world, scientific knowledge must guard

itself against ideological infiltration—ideological posing of questions and answers. For example, an apparently acceptable (but ideological) answer to the question, what guarantees the possibility of knowledge or the correctness of the cognitive appropriation of the real world, is the social practice, one may even qualify it by such word as Communist or proletarian. But even then, Althusser points out, such practice implies interest which is ideological in nature. So science should be far removed from ideology in respect of its practices. Science must have its own theoretical practice, distinct from other practices such as economic practice, political practice, technical practice or ideological practice. Althusser, then finally, in reply to the questions : what guarantees the possibility of knowledge, the correctness of the cognitive appropriation of the real, answers : ‘the theoretical practice is indeed its own criterion, and contains in itself definite protocols with which to validate the quality of its product, i.e., the criteria of the scientificity of the products of scientific practice’.<sup>47</sup>

The last distinction between ideology and science (namely Marxist science of history) as found in Althusser’s analysis appears to be in respect of their respective site in the social totality. It has been indicated in the preceding parts of this paper that Althusser has regarded ideology as a level or instance of the superstructure in the structure-superstructure complex that constitutes the social totality. But he has accused Gramsci for attributing to the concept of superstructure such a breadth that it can include science in its fold and observed : ‘this is to attribute to the concept of “superstructure” a breadth Marx never allowed, for he only ranged within it : (1) politico-legal superstructure, and (2) the ideological superstructure ... : except in his Early Works (especially the *1844 Manuscripts*), Marx never included scientific knowledge in it’.<sup>48</sup> As pointed out by many authors, here lies the root of confusing dichotomous relation between ideology and science as assumed by Althusser.<sup>49</sup>

#### Site of Science

According to Althusser, unlike ideology science cannot have any practico-social function. So it can be included neither in the superstructure that functions for the reproduction of the conditions of

production nor in such infrastructural elements as the productive forces 'pressed into service of capital' or capitalist class. Thus the site of science cannot but remain outside the reach of class-determination. And Althusser appears to be consistent in accepting such logical conclusion of the premises of his arguments. But Marx has indicated the site of science within the class-determined sphere in the infrastructure — superstructure complex not only in the *Economic* and *Philosophic Manuscripts* but also in his later writings. As for example, Marx and Engels have observed the following in *The German Ideology* :

Where speculation ends, where real life starts, there consequently begins real, positive science, the expounding of the practical activity, of the practical processes of development of men.<sup>50</sup>

As Althusser considers this book to be a product of break i.e. the diverging point where Marx is emerging as a scientist, leaving behind his pre-scientific past, Marx's writings in *Capital* are cited below :

It (division of labour) is completed in modern industry, which makes science a productive force distinct from labour and presses it into the service of capital.<sup>51</sup>

This clearly indicates how Marx unhesitatingly admitted the class-determination of science. Engels too, who was Marx's career-long collaborator and whose analysis provided Althusser with valuable insights (as indicated in the beginning of this paper), has demonstrated the social determination of science in the following lines in the last year of his life :

If a society has a technical need that advances science more than ten universities.<sup>52</sup>

Lenin also, for whom Althusser has great respect, has emphasized the class-determination of science (meaning natural science) in various places. Following are a few examples :

A monopoly, once it is formed and controls thousands of millions, inevitably penetrates into every sphere of public life ... (sometimes) to devise new methods of production to

test technical improvement (and sometimes for) deliberately retarding technical progress.<sup>53</sup>

Again he observes :

Science and technology exist (in capitalist society) only for the rich, for the propertied class ...<sup>54</sup>

Once again in connexion with education :

What must we take from the old schools, from the old kind of science ? It was the declared aim of the old type of school to produce men with an all round education to teach the sciences in general. We know that this was utterly false, since the whole of society was based and maintained on the division of people into classes, into exploiters and oppressed.

... the old schools turned men of science into men who had to write and say whatever pleased the capitalists. ...you will be sure of success ... in working to make knowledge and science no longer something for the privileged, no longer a medium for reinforcing the position of the rich and exploiters, but a weapon for the emancipation of the working and exploited people.<sup>55</sup>

Similar is the opinion of Mao, whose concept of contradiction Althusser has taken as a plank for his theoretical work. Pointing out the fault of a Soviet textbook he has observed :

This textbook ... seldom engages the question of the superstructure i.e. the class nature of the state, philosophy and science.<sup>55a</sup>

A noted Marxist natural scientist like J. D. Bernal has also emphasized not only the state (i.e. class) determination of technology but also of theoretical science in the following lines :

... technique largely depends on the state of science, and science depends far more still on the *State* and the requirements of the technique.<sup>56</sup>

The increasing financial dependence of research in both the physical and social sciences on the state and big business in modern times may be found in the valuable research findings of Robert Nisbet some of which are presented below :

Beginning in the 1940s an immense amount of money began to flow into the more distinguished American Universities : ... If

the physical sciences were the first to enjoy the new affluence, then social sciences and last of all, the humanities came to know such affluence in time. From federal government primarily but also state governments and, of course, foundations such as Ford huge sums began to pour into universities for the express purpose of research.<sup>57</sup>

The title of Nisbet's book namely *The Degradation of Academic Dogma* indicates what little autonomy there has remained for the scientific practice that Althusser is so eager to preserve. If there is any element of autonomy it is articulated with the 'structure in dominance' by a relation of dependence in accordance with Althusser's main theoretical framework. That it is so articulated, that the financial assistance is extended to the universities for research in social and physical sciences only to serve the interest of the capitalist state and big business will be evident from the intimacy of modern science and warfare,<sup>58</sup> which Michael Kidron has demonstrated factually in the following lines :

No less than 3,00,000 qualified scientists were engaged in research and development for military and space purposes in OECD area (those listed plus Canada and Belgium).<sup>59</sup>

Thus it is evident that both ideology (as indicated earlier in this paper) and science are class determined. Kidron's factual observation indicates that the relations of production which once offered itself as 'the forms of development of the productive forces,' in Marx's view, have turned not only 'into their fetters'<sup>60</sup> to further development but as a destructive agent eager to demolish both the products of earlier development and the human lives as well.

Thus the scientists, whose role Kidron has indicated and whom the capitalist state and big business have financed are the 'hired prize-fighters' in place of 'disinterested inquirers' possessing 'bad conscience and evil intent of apologetic' 'in place of genuine scientific research' as Marx found in his days.<sup>61</sup> These 'hired prize-fighters' cannot be as 'scientifically honest' as Ricardo who does not mind 'whether the advance of the productive forces slays landed property or workers'<sup>62</sup> and 'establishes the truth of his formula by deriving it from all economic relations, and by explaining in this way all phenomena',<sup>63</sup> and has examined 'how matters stand with the

contradiction between the apparent and actual movement of the system'.<sup>64</sup> In Marx's opinion it is 'precisely that which makes his doctrine a scientific system'.<sup>65</sup> But when and why in Marx's view, the classical political economy ceased to be science? Marx answers both the questions in his following observation:

Political economy can remain a science only so long as the class-struggle is latent or manifests itself only, in isolated and sporadic phenomena.

(But as in) France and in England the Bourgeoisie had conquered political power... the class-struggle, practically as well as theoretically took on more and more outspoken and threatening forms. It sounded the knell of scientific bourgeois economy. It was thence forth no longer a question, whether this theorem or that was true, but whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, politically dangerous or not."<sup>66</sup>

Thus the classical political economy had lost its scientific character and failed to produce true knowledge of the real world by serving the interest of a class that obstructs the development of whole of mankind.

### Misrepresentation of Reality

In similar manner Marx and Engels have asserted that the 'production of ideas...is at first directly interwoven with the material activity of men ;' as such, 'religion metaphysics and all the rest of ideology as well as the forms of consciousness corresponding to these, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence' and 'every class which is aiming at domination ... must first conquer political power in order to represent its interest ... as the general interest.' This misrepresentation of reality or the upholding of partial class interest as the general interest when reflected through ideology must show 'men and their relations ... upside down.'<sup>67</sup> Thus the reason for the misrepresentation of reality is the same in science as in ideology particularly in Marx's analysis.

So the question is when both science and ideology will be able to represent the reality quite correctly? Science's case has been partly indicated in a citation from Marx. It may be further elaborated and contended that when science will not subserve the interest

of a class that hinders the further development of the productive forces as well as that of the interest of the entire humanity, or to speak positively, when it will serve a class whose interest will coincide with the interest of the whole of humanity, that is the proletarian class, 'the revolutionary class, the class that holds future in its hands' the class whose 'mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of individual property,'<sup>68</sup> only then science will represent that reality, uphold reason and rationality. Thus it is 'only the working class' as Marx asserts emphatically, that can 'convert science from an instrument of class rule into a popular force, convert the men of science themselves from panderers to class prejudice, place-hunting state parasites, and allies of capital into free agents of thought'.<sup>69</sup>

In similar manner, ideology can also represent the real world in a non-distorted and non-concealed form only when such ideology will be the ideology of the proletarian class, the class which 'no longer counts as a class in society ... and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes',<sup>70</sup> the class whose interests thus ultimately coincide with that of the entire humanity.<sup>71</sup> So Marxism as the ideology of the proletariat can be regarded as scientific in so far as it has originated not from the necessity of maintaining the existing capitalist society but from the necessity of abolishing such society, the latter necessity being based not upon the structural elements of the existing capitalist society, but upon the elements of the future human society which are given birth to within the womb of the present society, in so far as it is free from the limitations for which the so-called social and natural sciences in capitalist society lose their scientificity, in so far as it has subjected itself to the continuous verification through revolutionary class-practice and its comprehension,<sup>72</sup> and in so far as it has accepted the logic of scientific inquiry. It is in this specific sense in which the following assertion of Lenin about the scientific nature of Marxian socialism as the ideology of the proletariat could be conceived of :

Socialism, in so far as it is the ideology of struggle of the proletarian class undergoes the general conditions of birth, development and consolidation of any ideology, that is to say, it is founded on all the material of human knowledge, it presupposes a high level of science, scientific work, etc...<sup>73</sup>

### Question of a Single Science

Thus Marxian ideology or the ideology of the proletarian class in the sense of a world outlook and the science that serves the proletarian interest must have some common features as indicated in the preceding paragraph. These common features might have prompted Cornforth to assert that 'with Marxism the whole ideology becomes scientific or at least on the way to becoming so'.<sup>74</sup> And it is for this reason that the 'pre-Marxist' Marx along with Engels observes the following :

We know only a single science, the science of history. One can look at history from two sides, and divide it into the history of nature and the history of men. The two sides are, however, inseparable, the history of nature and the history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist. The history of nature, called natural science, ... but we will have to examine the history of men, since almost the whole ideology amounts either to a distorted conception of this history or to a complete abstraction from it.<sup>75</sup>

But as their observation indicates the two are not the same but different aspects of the same reality sustained in the unity of the social whole. This indicates a distinction within unity in a dialectical sense as exemplified in Marx's following observation :

Thinking and being are thus certainly *distinct*, but at the same time they are in *unity* with each other.<sup>76</sup>

Thus ideology and science are not always mutually exclusive and do not always presuppose a dichotomous relation as Althusser appears to have made a tenacious endeavour to establish. But Althusser does not appear to have totally ignored these aspects in his later analysis. He has provided the criteria with which one is to examine the validity of scientific knowledge. And such criteria and protocol in the case of science have to be developed in the course of scientific practice. But at first he has not claimed absolute autonomy of such practice as may be evident in his following observation :

We think the relations establishing and articulating these different practices (that is, ideological, political, technical, scientific or economic) one with another by thinking their *degree of independence* and their type of "relative" *autonomy*,

which are themselves fixed by their *type of dependence* with respect to the practice which is "determinant in the last instance": economic practice.

Though in the above manner he has admitted the socio-economic determination of the scientific practice in some degree, he has not cast his theoretical anchor there. In order to ensure much more autonomy than this he goes ahead and observes: 'We shall go further'.<sup>77</sup> But where, it is very difficult to know.

### Class Perspective

He has even admitted in his subsequent writings that '*class conditions in theory*' had to be achieved for Marx to be able to conceive and carry out his *scientific work*' or that 'it is only from the point of view of class exploitation that it is possible to *see* and analyse the mechanisms of a class society and therefore to produce a scientific knowledge'. Here also the process of social origination and determination of scientific knowledge has been made hazy with his notion of ideology-science dichotomy in the following manner: 'he (Marx) has given back to Workers' Movement in a theoretical form what he took from it in a political and ideological form'.<sup>78</sup> Thus he indicates a qualitative transformation of what Marx has received and a discontinuity between his input and output.

It has to be admitted that the contention of Althusser as presented in the preceding paragraph indicates 'an internal evolution and displacement giving rise to the new Theses,' as the author himself submits. He also submits that after indicating the scientific discovery of Marx he should have said that 'this science cannot be a science like any other, ... precisely because it reveals the mechanism of class exploitation, repression and domination, in the economy, in politics and in ideology ... it is only acceptable to the proletariat, whom it "represents" ... (and who) set it to work in practice ... (and thus) Marxist science has become the theoretical weapon of the revolution'.<sup>79</sup> Here instead of making Marxist science of history a mathematical science having its own criterion to validate its knowledge Althusser feels the need 'to develop the new science (of Marx) and (his) philosophy with all the necessary rigour and daring, linking them to the requirements and inventions of the

practice of revolutionary class struggle'.<sup>80</sup> What is new in this submission which other authors have not pointed out is that Althusser is talking of linking science and philosophy to the 'requirements of the practice of revolutionary class-struggle', that is, linking to socio-practical function. But he, still, has not admitted that the Marxist science has such function and as such, sticks to his old position. And though he emphasizes that 'Philosophy represents the class struggle in theory,' but this 'philosophical battle', as he points out, takes place on the frontier between the scientific and the ideological.<sup>81</sup> Thus philosophy, which represents the class struggle in theory remains on the frontier of science not inside it. This implies science is *not* class-struggle in theory or in Edgley's words 'not political enough: because it is still theory; because ... all good science, Marxist or otherwise, is theory'.<sup>82</sup> Althusser does not permit politics to enter the protected area of science because 'Theoretical practice produces knowledges which can then figure as means that will serve the ends of technical practice ... (But) the relation between technique (of revolution in this case) and knowledge is an *external*, unreflected relation ... It is this exteriority which justifies Lenin's thesis of the necessity to import Marxist theory into spontaneous political practice of working class'.<sup>83</sup> But wherefrom has Lenin wanted to import the 'Marxist theory'? Is it a sphere outside the class-relations or class-determination? The following observation of Lenin will speak volumes:

Class political consciousness (or theoretical knowledge) can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes.<sup>84</sup>

### Fusion of Theory and Practice

<sup>80</sup> What is more, this assumption of the import of knowledge to the workers from without implies to Althusser the exteriority of science to politics which denies the specific unity of Marxist theory and working class practice.<sup>85</sup> But contrary to what Althusser has

interpreted Lenin emphasized, quite correctly, the fusion of theory and practice in the following manner :

In every country there has been a period in which the working class movement existed apart from socialism, each going its own way; and in every country this isolation has weakened both socialism and the working class movement. Only the *fusion* of socialism (its theory) with the working class movement (i.e. its practice) has in all countries created durable basis for both (emphasis added).<sup>96</sup>

#### Impelling Considerations for Invoking Stalin

Thus Lenin's observation asserting the unity or fusion of the socialist theory and practice does not support Althusser. But what impels him to place the Marxist science of history in a protected insulated place outside the superstructure where class and social determination cannot reach ? An attempt may be made to find an answer to this question in the perspective or conjuncture, that Althusser has placed and cited at the outset of this paper, from which he wants his reader to judge the honesty of his effort and correctness of analysis. If this is made it will appear that he has felt very much mentally disturbed or perturbed at the perplexing events in the national and international communist movement and might have been very much anxious to make Marxism invulnerable to any attempt of distortion to meet the temporary personal or political or factional need. He must have also noticed that ideology (particularly the capitalist one) is the handmaid of such need. From this it naturally follows that if Marxism has to be made so invulnerable it must be regarded as something other than ideology. What that 'something other than ideology' could be might have been the question lurking in his mind. His thorough study of Marx's writings quite justifiably might have suggested that this 'something other than ideology' is nothing but science itself. The citation from *The German Ideology* (in a preceding paragraph of this paper) in respect of the concept of a single science shows that Marx and Engels have expressed their desire to study the history of man (on the basis of the materialist conception of history) scientifically to find out ideological distortion. In *Capital* also (wherefrom suitable citations have been furnished earlier), it is evident that Marx has accepted the essence of science that is, the logic of its inquiry and

asserted that it is capitalist interest which is afraid of the pursuit of true science in a rational manner and try to guide (or misguide ?) its research in such directions as will serve its interest. So Althusser has not committed any mistake in conceiving Marxist theory of history as science. Even after conceiving Marxist theory of history as science he could not make himself sure that it will make Marxist theory of history invulnerable to the attempts of various types of distortions to meet temporary personal, political and factional need. That is why he is eager to place this science in particular and science in general in an insulated protected area beyond the reach of social and class determination. And he has found the way in which this has to be done in Stalin's treatment of language. In his very first book, namely, *For Marx*, Althusser observes the following in full praise of Stalin :

Reading between the lines of the few simple pages in which he reproached the zeal of those who were making strenuous efforts to prove language a superstructure, we could see that there were limits to the use of the class criterion, and that we had been made to treat science, a status claimed by every page of Marx, as merely the first-comer among ideologies.<sup>87</sup>

### Marxism As Science Stands in Vacuo

And in *Reading Capital* following Stalin's formulation Althusser observes : 'science can no longer be ranged within the category of "superstructure" than can language, which as Stalin showed, escapes it'. The reason Althusser adduces for it is as follows : 'To make science a superstructure is to think of it as one of those "organic" ideologies which form such a close "bloc" with the structure that they have the same "history" as it does ! ... the common fate of a single history : that of the "historical bloc" unifying structure and superstructure'. And the purpose that this exclusion of science from superstructure, this break, serves is to 'save it (science) from the vicissitudes of political and economic history' that is from the social and class determination.<sup>88</sup> The theoretical difficulty that this formulation involves is that the exclusion of science from the 'historical bloc unifying structure and superstructure,' means its exclusion from 'the structure-superstructure complex which constitutes' in his opinion, 'the essence of any social formation'.<sup>89</sup> But contradicting

the consequence of his own theoretical exposition of Marx's analysis. Althusser contends that, despite the exclusion of science from the structure-superstructure complex, the detachment of science from the ideology 'inaugurates a new form of historical existence' for the science.<sup>90</sup> But it is very difficult, indeed impossible, to think of the site of the historical existence of science 'outside the whole structure-superstructure complex of the "social formation"'.<sup>91</sup>

And it may be indicated following Althusser's own analysis that for 'distinguishing between the relatively autonomous and peculiar history of scientific knowledge and the other modalities of historical existence (those of the ideological and politico-legal superstructures, and that of the economic structure)'<sup>92</sup> it is not necessary to exclude science from this structure-superstructure complex that constitutes the social formation. His following observations will substantiate and amply clarify this contention :

We can and must say : for each mode of production there is a peculiar time and history, punctuated in a specific way by the development of the productive forces ; the relations of production have their peculiar time and history, punctuated in a specific way ; the political superstructure has its own history ... ; philosophy has its own time and history ... ; aesthetic productions have their own time and history ... ; scientific formations have their own time and history, etc. ... [But the] fact that each of these times and each of these histories is *relatively autonomous* does not make them so many domains which are *independent* of the whole : the specificity of each of these times and of each of these histories—in other words, their *relative autonomy* and *independence*—is based on a certain type of articulation in the whole, and therefore on a certain type of *dependence* with respect to the whole. ... The conception of the "relative" independence of a history and of a level can therefore never be reduced to the positive affirmation of an independence *in vacuo*, nor even to the mere negation of a dependence in itself ; the conception of this "relative" independence defines its "relativity", i.e., the type of *dependence* that produces and establishes this mode of "relative" independence as its necessary results : at the level of the articulation of component structures in the whole, it defines the type of dependence which produces relative independence and whose effects we can observe in the histories of the different "levels".<sup>93</sup>

Thus the above observation indicates that the notion of 'relatively autonomous and peculiar history of scientific knowledge' does not

mean 'independence *in vacuo*' that is, sciences' exclusion from the structure-superstructure complex. In other words, the above citation indicates the site of the 'relatively autonomous and peculiar history of scientific knowledge' within the structure-superstructure complex of the social formation contrary to Althusser's strong contention that science cannot be included in the superstructure. Perhaps it is for this reason that Andrew Collier observes the following as a critical support :

Althusser does place science outside the superstructure. But it is not necessary to do so in order to avoid historicism ... I am sure that Althusser did not intend his denial of science's place in the superstructure to deny this, but it can only give that impression.<sup>94</sup>

### Language and Class Determination

But nobody investigates the root of this theoretical trouble that Althusser suffers from. It appears that this root lies in his non-critical acceptance of non-class criterion as found in Stalin's formulation about language for ensuring the invulnerability of Marxist science of history to attempts of distortion. But the fact is that neither Marx nor Engels, not even Lenin has applied such non-class criterion to the treatment of language. As for example Marx and Engels have made the following observations in *The German Ideology* :

... language is practical, real consciousness ... like consciousness, ... arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men.<sup>95</sup>

And that this intercourse means something akin to relations of production, the base or structure of the structure-superstructure complex that constitutes the social formation will be evident from the following :

Thus all collisions in history have their origin, according to our view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse.<sup>96</sup>

And as regards the process of the formation of national languages Marx and Engels have observed the following :

... in every modern developed language, partly as a result of the historical development of the language from pre-existing material, ... partly owing to the crossing and mixing of nations, ... and partly as a result of the concentration of the dialects within single nation brought about by economic and political concentration, the spontaneously evolved speech has been turned into a national language.<sup>97</sup>

This indicates how economic and political concentration articulate the various partial causes which generate their impact upon the evolving of speech into a national language.

The intimate connexion of language with the capitalist mode of production and exchange, and therefore, with the class-relation and class-domination will be evident from the following observation of Lenin :

The more democratic the political system in Russia becomes, the more powerfully, rapidly and extensively capitalism will develop, the more urgently will the requirements of economic exchange impel various nationalities to study the language most convenient for general commercial relations.<sup>98</sup>

The determining relation of the capitalist spatial and temporal matrices with the language has been indicated by Poulantzas, a modern Marxist thinker, in the following manner :

The very structure of national language is profoundly reorganized by the state : the relationship of language to the capitalist spatial and temporal matrices is restructured in so far as it is cast in the mould of a State which crystallizes intellectual labour in its specifically capitalist separation from manual labour.<sup>99</sup>

#### **Root of Wrong Formulation**

But contrary to all such observations it is Stalin who has observed that 'language cannot be included either in the category of bases or in the category of superstructures' that 'language may equally serve ... both the exploiters and the exploited' and as such he concludes : 'The "class-character" of language formula is erroneous and non-Marxist'.<sup>100</sup> It may be indicated that Stalin's confusion arises from his mechanical understanding of Marxism. As

for example, he observes : 'If the base changes or is eliminated, then, following this, its superstructure changes or is eliminated ; if a new base arises, then, following this, a superstructure arises corresponding to it.'<sup>101</sup> This means that he has not understood the significance of the following observations of Marx :

With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is *more or less* rapidly transformed. (emphasis added.)

The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.<sup>102</sup>

As Stalin could not follow the full implications of these observations he asserts that 'language radically differs from the superstructure', because although in Russia the 'capitalist base has been eliminated', and the 'superstructure on the capitalist base has been eliminated and a new super-structure created corresponding to the socialist base', the 'Russian language has remained basically what it was before the October Revolution'.<sup>103</sup>

#### **Reason for the Failure of Althusser to Follow his Own Analysis**

But the root of such confusion should not have escaped the notice of Althusser because it is he who has observed that 'a revolution in the structure does not *ipso facto* modify the existing superstructures ... for they have sufficient of their own consistency to *survive beyond* their *immediate life* context, even to recreate, to "secrete" substitute conditions of existence temporarily' and 'that new society produced by the Revolution may itself *ensure* the *survival*, that is the *reactivation* of older elements through ... the forms of the new superstructure'. (Quoted earlier in this paper). So if the language does not change with the change of the other superstructural elements he should not have regarded language as something that defies class-criterion following Stalin. Thus it appears that he could not make himself completely free from the vestiges of Stalinism which prompt him to commit a fundamental mistake by regarding science, as something like language, that defies class-criterion. As such the following observation of Valentino Gerratana, rightly deserves mention :

The problem of Stalinism has been ever-present in all Althusser's theoretical work, perhaps qualified but never marginal.<sup>104</sup>

It has been indicated in the first part of this paper that Althusser's intervention, which 'reveals the major opposition that separates science from ideology', though conditioned by the contemporary theoretical-ideological conjuncture has been an intervention in that conjuncture consisting of such ideological-theoretical elements as the economic determinism and the Stalinist dogmatism on the one hand and the violent reaction against that dogmatism in the form of voluntaristic humanism supported by the twenty-second Congress of the CPSU that denied class-struggle in the USSR and western communist parties seeking alliance with the catholics and professing peaceful transition to socialism on the other. The purpose of his intervention appears to be making Marxism invulnerable to such attempts of interpretation as may be made from the perspectives provided either by the determinism and dogmatism of Stalin or by the voluntaristic humanism. But he has failed to achieve his purpose because he could not completely extricate himself intellectually from the Stalinist theoretical-ideological hangover<sup>105</sup> to situate science in the sphere of class-relations within the structure-superstructure complex constituting social formation without following Stalin's formulation in respect of language.

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Andrew Levine, 'A Reading of Marx', in *Radical America*, Vol. III, No. 5, September, 1969, pp. 3-4; Paul Hirst, *On Law and Ideology*, Macmillan, London, 1979, pp. 22, 39.
- 2 Martin Shaw, *Marxism and Social Science*, Pluto Press, London, 1975, p. 112.
- 3 Andrew Levine, 'Althusser's Marxism', in *Economy and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 243-4.
- 4 Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. by Ben Brewster, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London, 1969, p. 32.
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 21.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 9.
- 7 Alex Callinicos, *Althusser's Marxism*, Pluto Press, London, 1976, p. 7. Callinicos has accepted this perspective and observed : 'What he (Althusser) writes of *For Marx* is true of all his work.'
- 8 Louis Althusser, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- 9 *ibid.*, pp. 9-11.
- 10 *ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
- 11 Rabin Blackburn and Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Louis Althusser and the Struggle for Marxism,' in Dick Howard and Karl E. Klare (eds.), *The Unknown Dimension : European Marxism since Lenin*, Basic Books, New York, 1972, p. 365.
- 12 Althusser, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-3.
- 13 *ibid.*, pp. 111, 113, 115-6.
- 14 *ibid.*, pp. 193-4.
- 15 *ibid.*, p. 194.
- 16 *ibid.*, pp. 201-2.
- 17 *ibid.*, pp. 204-6.
- 18 Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. by Ben Brewster, NLB, London, 1979, pp. 188-9.

With a view to explaining the causal process in social formation encompassed by the structure-superstructure complex Althusser has borrowed two concepts—one is overdetermination and the other is structural causation. As the latter concept implies 'a cause immanent in its effects in the Spinozist sense of the term' it is difficult to accept. First of all, what does the Spinozist sense of the term mean in Spinoza's own words? Now, Spinoza in his *Ethics* observes that 'all things which are, are in God, and so depend upon Him' and that 'without Him they can neither be nor be conceived'. (See Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. by W. H. White, in *Great Books of Western World* No. 31., Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., Chicago, London, Toronto, 1952, part I, p. 366). Hindess and Hirst citing this one-sided and unilateral dependence of all things upon God from Spinoza have asserted that 'structured causality converts the complex totality (that Althusser successfully enunciated in *For Marx*) into a simple totality ; a whole each of the part of which is necessary to its existence ...Each part is subordinate to the whole... . (See Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston, 1975, pp. 316-7.) This means that the super-structure including ideology as one of its instances, depends for its existence on the structure or the mode of production but not vice-versa. That is, ideology, politics or class-struggle do not counter-determine the mode of production, not even marginally. Hindess and Hirst have also criticised Althusser because following Spinoza's conception of eternal existence of God he has assumed the eternity of the mode of production, the structure-in-dominance and thus accepted the teleology of structural causality. (See Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., pp. 183, 272, 273-4). But if mode of production is conceived in abstract and general sense then a mode of production (whatever may be its form and nature) must exist, as of necessity, so long as human beings will continue to exist.

What has been missed by Hindess and Hirst may be highlighted from the exposition of Spinoza's thought as made by

H. A. Wolfson, the noted interpreter of Spinoza, in the following manner :

'With reference to the totality of modes God is therefore called an immanent cause, but with reference to Himself He is called *causa sui* which means the denial of any kind of cause whatsoever, whether external or internal.' (See Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, Vol. 1, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1934, p. 325). But the mode of production or economy or structure-in-dominance cannot be a *causa sui* like God independent of human beings, their volition, action and consciousness. Here Althusser appears to have denied (even if unintentionally) the role of men as actors as conditioned by the circumstances in which they live although Althusser has emphasized this aspect, time and again, in *For Marx* and elsewhere. (See *For Marx* pp. 246-7; in 'Reply to John Lewis' Althusser emphatically says : 'It is masses who make history.' See 'Reply to John Lewis (Self-Criticism)' in *Marxism Today*, Vol. 16, No. 10, October, 1972, p. 315). Again, in Althusser's opinion Hegel's method, his concepts and terms are inseparably enmeshed in his formulation and as such cannot be extracted and used elsewhere in a Marxian framework. (See *For Marx*, pp. 90-4). Similar seems to be the case with Spinoza's concept. But while indicating the theoretical advances achieved through the concept of structural causation Robin Blackburn and Stedman Jones appear to have missed these theoretical problems attending the concept. (See Robin Blackburn and Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Louis Althusser and the Struggle for Marxism', in Dick Howard and Karl E Klare (eds.), op. cit., pp. 378-9). It should be noted that Althusser's concept of overdetermination does not suffer from such theoretical difficulties. (See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, p. 88). In fact, this concept can greatly help in establishing the fact that Marxism is not reductionism—either in the form of voluntarism or in the form of economic determinism.

19 Louis Althusser, op. cit., pp. 209, 211.

- 20 ibid., p. 213.
- 21 ibid., pp. 215-6.
- 22 ibid., pp. 100-101 ; Gregor McLennan, Victor Molina, Roy Peters, 'Althusser's Theory of Ideology,' in *On Ideology* published by Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, Study no. 10, 1978, p. 84.
- 23 Louis Althusser, op. cit., p. 232.
- 24 ibid., pp. 234-5.
- 25 ibid., p. 233.
- 26 Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, NLB, London, 1971, p. 143.

But according to Ralph Miliband 'Calling all these (institutions) "state ideological apparatuses" is based on or at least produces a confusion between *class power* and *state power*, a distinction which is important not to blur'. While 'class power is exercised through many institutions and agencies' some of which 'are primarily designed for the purpose, e.g. political parties of the dominant class, interest and pressure groups, etc.', others 'may not be specifically designed for the purpose, yet may serve it, e.g. churches, schools and family'. And this ruling 'class power is generally challenged by a counter-power, that of the subordinate classes, often through the same institutions, and also through different ones'. What is more that 'some institutions are "used" by opposite classes simply means that these institutions are not "monolithic" but that on the contrary they are themselves arenas of class conflict'. And in conclusion Miliband observes : 'even if the process of "statisation" is taken fully into account, as it obviously must be, there is absolutely no warrant for speaking of the "state ideological apparatuses" in regard to institutions which, in bourgeois democratic societies, are not part of state'. (See Ralph Miliband, *Marxism and Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, pp. 54-7).

Göran Therborn has also made almost similar observations. In his opinion 'many of the apparatuses mentioned by Althusser...do not at all form part of the state in the ordinary sense of the word' and it 'seems rather sterile and even actively confusing, from an analytical point of view, to extend the concept of state to cover everything that serves the reproduction of the social order'. Although all 'such apparatuses are traversed by a class-struggle, but even in a simplified model we should make distinction between two types of apparatuses bearing upon the formation of class-members. One is *predominantly* a manifestation of the ruling class (or ruling alliances) organization of power and discourse; the other is made up of what we might call *counter-apparatus*, which largely express, although in varying degree, the resistance and discourse of the ruled classes'. (See Göran Therborn, *The Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology*, Verso and NLB, London, 1980, p. 85).

But what is fact is that Althusser has not totally ignored these aspects of the ideological state apparatuses. As Althusser observes, 'the Ideological State apparatuses may be not only the *stake*, but also *site*, of struggle, and often of bitter forms of class struggle. The class (or class alliance) in power cannot lay down the law in the ISAs as easily as it can in the (repressive) State apparatus, not only because the former ruling classes are able to retain strong positions there for a long time, but also because the resistance of the exploited classes is able to find means and occasions to express itself there either by the utilization of their contradictions, or by conquering combat positions in them in struggle'. (See *ibid.*, p. 147). Nor he has ignored the difference between State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses as he observes that the former 'belongs entirely to the *public domain*' while 'much of the larger part' of the latter 'are part, on the contrary, of the private domain'. In reply to the question : Why he has regarded 'as Ideological State Apparatuses, institutions which for the most part do not possess public status, but are simply *private* institutions' he answers, following Gramsci, that the 'distinction between the

public and the private is a distinction internal to bourgeois law, and valid, in the (subordinate) domains in which bourgeois law exercises its, "authority" and the 'State, which is the state of the ruling class, is neither public nor private'. (See *ibid.*, p. 144). That certain institutions including the state have not been created formally as the instrument of the ruling class, as has been maintained by Miliband, while others have been so created does not make difference in one respect in that both are utilized to further the private interests of the capitalists. Here the State loses its apparent elusive public character. Still the distinction is a guide that indicates that the locus of class-struggle lies in the arena of the State, and not within the organization of the ruling party but against it.

27 *ibid.*, pp. 146, 147, 150, 152.

28 *ibid.*, pp. 166-8.

29 *ibid.*, p. 173.

30 *ibid.*, p. 182.

31 *ibid.*, pp. 184, 185-6.

32 *ibid.*, pp. 173, 175.

33 Althusser's reference to Spinoza, in this case, means the possession of scientific knowledge by Spinoza required for the identification of ideological recognition which is utterly untenable because Spinoza was an idealist par excellence. (See E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and other Essays*, Merlin Press, London, 1978, p. 201).

34 Louis Althusser, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

35 Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, pp. 29, 39.

36 Gregor McLennan, Victor Molina and Roy Peters, *art. cit.*, in *On Ideology*, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

37 *ibid.*, p. 97.

38 Louis Althusser, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

39 Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, p. 175.

- 40 ibid., p. 18.
- 41 Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 231.
- 42 ibid., pp. 168, 183-4, 191.
- 43 Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, op. cit., p. 47.
- 44 Louis Althusser, op. cit., pp. 185-6.
- 45 Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, op. cit., p. 48.
- 46 ibid., pp. 54-6.
- 47 ibid., pp. 57-9.

In order to remove science from the sphere of class relations, class domination and class-based utilization Althusser has ignored the relevance of science to reality and asserted that science has its own criterion of validity, or like the geometry it has its own method of proof. Thus what follows from this is that science need not conform to reality in order to help men understand the reality and to make itself in men's practice. But Marx has explained how Ricardo's stress on the determination of value by labour-time enables him 'to elucidate how far a science which in fact only reflects and reproduces the manifest forms of the process and therefore also how far these manifestations themselves correspond to the basis on which the inner coherence, the actual physiology of bourgeois society rests...' (See Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus-value*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, Part II, p. 166). And Lenin has also stressed the conformity of scientific knowledge to reality having purged out the idealist fault from the reflection theory in his assertion that 'Man cannot comprehend = reflect = mirror nature as a whole in its completeness, its "immediate totality", he can only eternally come closer to this, creating abstractions, concepts, laws, a scientific picture of the world etc. etc.' (See V. I. Lenin, 'Conspectus of Hegel's Science of Logic' in *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, Vol. 38, p. 182). As regards Marx's theory he observes: '...the sole conclusion to be drawn from the opinion held by the Marxists that Marx's theory is an objective truth is that by following the

path of Marxian theory we shall draw closer and closer to objective truth (without ever exhausting it)'; ... (See V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1947, p. 142). And how much close to reality or objective truth a scientific theory (including Marxism) has come or how much correctly the cognitive appropriation of the reality it has made has to be determined by the Marxist criterion of practice as Lenin has asserted : 'The standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge... (As such) what our practice confirms is the sole, ultimate and objective truth, (and) from this must follow the recognition that the only path to this truth is the path of science, which holds the materialist point of view'. (*ibid.*). For a bold defence of this Marxist and Leninist contention one may see Hoffman's writings (See John Hoffman, *Marxism and the Theory of Praxis*, International Publishers, New York, 1975, chap. 5). As Althusser talks of the internal proof of the scientificity of the science of Mathematics, the observation of a mathematician like D. D. Kosambi may be cited. In his opinion, 'science knows only one test, that of validity of material proof'. And 'Science is nothing if it does not work in practice'. (See D. D. Kosambi, *Exasperating Essays*, India Book Exchange, Calcutta, 1977, p. 46). Again contrary to Althusser's view that science has its own proof, apart from the conformity to physical world, as in Geometry, Theckedath contends that 'Geometrical truth now becomes related to properties of the physical world.' (See K. K. Theckedath, 'Dialectical Contradiction in the Sciences' in *Social Scientist*, No. 121, June, 1983, p. 56). Thus 'Althusser', in the opinion of Schaff, 'has lost sight of the necessity of retaining the theory of reflection as an element of gnosiology'. (See Adam Schaff, *Structuralism Marxism*, Pergamon Press, London, 1978, pp. 83-90).

48 *ibid.*, p. 133.

49 Norman Geras, 'Althusser's Marxism : An Assessment,' in *Western Marxism* edited by New Left Review, NLB, London, 1977, pp. 262-5 ; Martin Shaw, op. cit., pp 112-3 ;

Andrew Collier, 'In Defence of Epistemology,' in John Mepham and D. H. Ruben (eds.), *Issues in Marxist Philosophy*, Harvester Press, Brighton, Sussex, Vol. III, pp. 60-1; Derek Gregory, *Ideology, Science and Human Geography*, Hutchin & Co. Ltd, London, 1978, pp. 109, 116.

50 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 43.

51 Karl Marx, *Capital*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, Vol. I, p. 361.

52 Frederick Engels's Letter to Borgius, January, 25, 1894, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 441.

53 V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, pp. 35, 92, 160.

54 V. I. Lenin, *On Culture and Cultural Revolution*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 64.

55 V. I. Lenin, *On Public Education*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, pp. 68, 85, 88.

55a Mao Tsetung, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1977, p. 51.

56 J. D. Bernal, *Marx and Science*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1952, p. 30.

57 Robert A. Nisbet, *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma : The Universities of America, 1945-1970*, Heinemann, London, 1971, p. 72.

58 Martin Shaw, op. cit., p. 9.

59 Michael Kidron, *Western Capitalism since the War*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1970, pp. 50-1.

60 Karl Marx, 'Preface' to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1950, p. 329.

61 Karl Marx, 'Afterword to the Second German Edition' in *Capital*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 15.

- 62 Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, op. cit., p. 118.
- 63 Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, No date, p. 54.
- 64 Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, op. cit., p. 166.
- 65 Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 54.
- 66 Karl Marx, 'Afterword ...' in *Capital*, op. cit., pp. 14-5.
- 67 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., pp. 42, 52-3.
- 68 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 41-2. (Lucio Colletti has stressed this point. See his book *From Rousseau to Lenin : Studies in Ideology and Society*, NLB, London, 1972, p. 236).
- 69 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Paris Commune*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980, p. 162.
- 70 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., p. 60. Larrain has pointed out the significance of this point in his observation that 'ideology could be distorted or scientific depending upon the class with which it is connected'. (See Jorge Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology*, BI Publications, Delhi, 1979, p. 200). But he has not clearly established this position.
- 71 Howard Selsam, *Socialism and Ethics*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1947, p. 92.
- 72 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., pp. 615, 617 (See Second and eighth theses on Feuerbach).
- 73 Quoted from *What Is To Be Done ?* (Oxford, 1963, Chapt. II) in Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, op. cit., p. 69. As the language of this quotation appears to be more appropriate than that of the Russian edition (see V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done ?* op. cit., Chapt. II, p. 32) it has been cited.
- 74 Maurice Cornforth, *Communism and Philosophy*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1980, p. 176.

75 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., p. 34.

76 Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Progress Publishers, 1974, p. 93. Sean Sayers has accused Althusser for misunderstanding the significance of such distinction within unity in the following manner : To guard against mechanistic and reductionist accounts 'by constructing a rigid and impassable gulf ... between philosophy (and ideology) and the Sciences and the arts, after the fashion of Althusser and bourgeois academic thought, is simply to embrace the opposite error. For this is to replace an abstract, one-sided and undialectical *identification* of such opposites with an equally abstract, one-sided and undialectical *distinction* (or *differentiation*) of them. (See Sean Sayers, 'Dualism, Materialism and Dialectics', in Richard Norman and Sean Sayers, *Hegel, Marx and Dialectic*, Harvester Press, Sussex, 1980, p. 93).

77 Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, op. cit., p. 58.

78 Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

79 ibid., pp. 7-8.

80 ibid., p. 17.

81 ibid., p. 18. It may be noted that Larrain has discovered the originality of Althusser in his making dichotomous distinction or opposition between ideology and science and supported the same. So he feels sad when Althusser tends to blur this distinction by observing that Marxism as ideology 'functions at the level of the masses as all ideology (by interpellating individuals as subjects), but it is soaked in historical experience and enlightened by principles of scientific analysis' (quoted from Louis Althusser, *Nuevos Escritos*, Editorial Laia, Barcelona, 1978, p. 100 in Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, 1983, p. 93). But a little analysis will show that Althusser has not deviated from his old position because he still asserts the separate existence of Marxism as ideology and Marxism as science— one being external to the other.

And it is because of the fact that science's position is external to that of the ideology, that it is possible for Marx's science to enlighten Marxian ideology. But this paper has shown when and under what circumstances this externality of science's relation to ideology will disappear.

- 82 Roy Edgley, 'Marx's Revolutionary Science', in John Mepham and D. H. Ruben (eds.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 12.
- 83 Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, op. cit., p. 171.
- 84 V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*, op. cit., pp. 78-9.
- 85 Roy Edgley, art. cit., in John Mepham and D. H. Ruben (eds.), op. cit., Vol. III, p. 17.
- 86 V. I. Lenin, *Party Work in the Masses*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 7.
- 87 Louis Althusser, op. cit., p. 22.
- 88 Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, op. cit., p. 133. But Jorge Larrain quite rightly emphasizes : 'Science does not constitute a special sphere exempt from the contingencies of class contradictions'. See his book, *The Concept of Ideology*, op. cit., p. 181.
- 89 Louis Althusser, op. cit., p. 111.
- 90 Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, op. cit., p. 133.
- 91 Martin Shaw, op. cit., p. 112.
- 92 Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, op. cit., p. 133.
- 93 ibid., pp. 99-100.
- 94 Andrew Collier, art. cit., in John Mepham and D. H. Ruben (eds.), op. cit., p. 60 (See note).
- 95 K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., p. 49.
- 96 ibid., p. 83.
- 97 ibid., p. 451.
- 98 V. I. Lenin, *Critical Remarks On National Question*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 8.
- 99 Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, NLB, London, 1978, p. 115.

- 100 J. V. Stalin, *Marxism And Problems of Linguistics*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976, pp. 6, 20, 34.
- 101 *ibid.*, p. 4.
- 102 Karl Marx, 'Preface' to *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, op. cit., p. 329 ; Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in K. Marx and F. Engels, op. cit., p. 225.
- 103 J. V. Stalin, op. cit., p. 4.
- 104 Valentino Gerratana, 'Althusser and Stalinism,' in *New Left Review*, Number, 101-102, February-April, 1977, p. 111.
- 105 Adam Schaff, op. cit., pp. 25-6. Examining the explanation that Althusser has offered for his intervention in the contemporary theoretical-ideological conjuncture in his "Introduction" to *For Marx* Schaff observes that 'the Marxists disillusioned by "ideology" (which in fact was the personality cult in which they believed and which they used to serve blindly) and longing for a pure science, saw a vista of structuralist paradise of objective science. Nothing is more characteristic in that respect than Althusser's "Introduction" to *For Marx*. It is an interesting document of soul searching by those who, after ideological turns and retreats start a longing for something new, but were unable to shed their old skin'. But Schaff has not pin-pointed the existence of the "old skin" or old views, its shortcomings and how the same has acted as the main root of Althusser's misconception about science and its dichotomous distinction from ideology.

## MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION : SOME OBSERVATIONS

DIPAK KUMAR DAS

This essay spans a long period from the late 1840s to 1920. Clearly, within their substantive links each of its five sections (dealing with Marx-Engles, the Socialist International, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, the second Comintern congress *seriatim*) signifies a focus of attention. And this makes their neat division impossible and certain repitions inevitable. The starting point of our discussion hardly requires any justification but a word or two have to be said about the choice of its limit. The first congress of the Communist International paid little attention to the colonial question. It was only at the next congress that the question was tackled in depth and certain concrete formulations were made. The issue on which M. N. Roy polemized with Lenin at this congress were to remain the central themes in controversies not only within the Comintern but crucially among the communists in colonial countries themselves upto and even beyond independence. Besides, one more brief remark on the scope and content is in order : our enquiry here is centred on the 'main currents' of Marxian thought on the problems facing the oppressed nations and their solutions, and hence the omission of the views of some of Marx's contemporaries or of his successors' outside them is not wholly arbitrary.

The human order that Marx and Engels envisioned (especially in the *Communist Manifesto*) to be established on the achievement of communism on a world scale is international and not national. And international not in the sense that it would encompass all the nations of the world in their present state but rather in the sense that it would mark the supersession of these *modern* nations and abolition of all national antagonisms and oppressions.<sup>1</sup> Thus the working class would have no 'fatherland' after the establishment of communism. Even before the workers would regard the 'country' they live

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in as the fatherland of their oppressors and work towards its transformation.<sup>3</sup> So they cannot have a fatherland in this sense also. In between two stages the workers must 'acquire political supremacy', 'rise to be the leading class of the nation', 'constitute itself *the nation*', and become 'so far, itself national' ('not', of course, as the authors of the *Manifesto* caution, in the 'bourgeois sense of the word'). But the workers' national states would be transitional, even if not shortlived, phenomena.<sup>4</sup>

The working class, though 'denied' a fatherland in the above two senses, is said to have definite *stake* in the nation it belongs to. That nation is the focal point of its constitution ; it is the primary site of its struggles. The workers must organise themselves as a class on a *national* basis, and must first of all settle accounts with their own bourgeoisie (for whom also the nation remains the focal point of its reproduction).<sup>4</sup> In the process of this struggle the working class would come to represent the revolutionary interest of all non-ruling classes (and 'rise to be the leading class of the nation', etc.) as the rising bourgeoisie did in the course of the (classical) democratic revolution in France — the similarity and difference between the two being too familiar, albeit sometimes oversimplified, a story to need any repetition here.

Marx and Engels, in their concrete study of the national question, scoffed at 'the romantic principle of nationalities in as far as it contains hypostatised essentialist concepts such as freedom and justice, as in the case of Bakunin or even as in the case of Mickiewicz and Mazzini, postulates the existence of messianic nation as a norm or necessity *outside* the ... [ class-struggle process ] and the relation of forces' (Fisera and Minnerup 1978 : I, 7). On the other hand, they dismissed the Proudhonists' nihilistic, cosmopolitan approach because of its negation of nations as 'antiquated prejudices' and its economist belief that the workers should concern themselves with purely 'economic' questions and leave political and, therefore, national movements alone. As true protagonists of proletarian internationalism they emphasized the importance of these movements from the standpoint of the concrete interest of the workers' struggle for emancipation. Clearly, for them, the historical tendency was towards internationalism but the point of departure was 'national'.



Theirs was an internationalism to be born of workers' 'common' struggles grounded in differential national materiality. This was stated most emphatically in connection with the Irish and Polish questions. In fact, both within the First International and outside Marx and Engels upheld, at least in these specific contexts, the right of national self-determination and explained most precisely its relationship with proletarian internationalism : the existence of independent nations and, relatedly, of 'distinct national organisations' was the prerequisite for any common international action. Thus, while opposed to making an absolute of the national question, they unmasked and attacked those who adopted an 'indifferentist' attitude towards the same. Broadly, their study of the cases in question seems to underline a method of analysis that moves from the national to the international and not the other way round.

Around 1848, however, the pair subordinated all issues involving the national question, for example, the establishment of united German national state, the restoration of Poland or the self-determination of Slavic nationalities, to the cause of democracy and revolution in central and eastern Europe. Their support or opposition to any national movement of the time was conditional upon its conformity to the interest of this cause. Underlying this there seems to be a somewhat 'instrumental conception of the nation' which neglects national materiality (as Poulantzas observes in a different context).

As is known, history moves through the origination and resolution of contradictions. And these contradictions have some sort of hierarchy — i.e., some one contradiction being more important than some others. Precisely the contradiction to be solved through a bourgeois-democratic revolution in central and eastern Europe in the face of the reactionary powers like tsarist Russia and other partners of the Holy Alliance appeared to Marx and Engels as more important than any other at the time and likewise, any issue likely to contribute to the resolution of this contradiction as more important than those which were not so. From this point of view they examined the question of Poland's reestablishment as bastion of defence against tsarist Russia which, along with Prussia and Austria, partitioned that country and wanted to exploit her strategic position to

mount all attacks upon the forces supposed to usher in a democratic revolution in Europe. Marx and Engels supported not only the Poles, but equally the Germans, Italians, Hungarians and generally all those fighting against German and Austrian despotism in the interest of freedom and democracy. Until September 1848 they sympathised with the Austrian Slavs and particularly the Czechs who revolted in the summer of that year as much against their landlords as against the mercenary troops of the Habsburgs. But as soon as these national groups seemed to look for their statehood to the forces opposing the democratic revolution in that part of Europe or come to terms with them, Engels, as the pair's spokesman in this regard, condemned them vehemently, and began to deny their right of self-determination. What is more, in so doing he called them 'wholly reactionary' or 'remnants of former nations' destined to disappear completely through absorption by their 'more progressive' great power neighbours or to be washed away from the face of the earth by the storm of world revolution. Certainly the Austrian Slavs could not be said to have societies devoid of classes and class antagonisms. But in the complicated situation of 1848-49 Engels' immediate query was whether these nationalities were contributing to the weakening or strengthening of the forces of reaction, whether they were reserves of the revolution or instruments of the counter-revolution. Perhaps Engels considered the Slavic nationalities reactionary because the leadership of their movement in many cases seemed to have passed into the hands of the people who were weak-willed tools of the counter-revolutionary forces, while the masses of their peasants and workers appeared ineffective or enticed into the traps of these reactionary forces by deceit or violence. Still, Engels, it must be admitted,<sup>5</sup> failed to understand that quite in a number of cases the Austrian ruling classes, taking advantages of the antagonism between the landowners and bourgeoisie of the *dominant nations* and the peasants and workers belonging to the *national minorities*, involved the latter in their offensive against the former who formed the core of the democratic revolution in the Habsburg empire. It was not realized that the Austrian rulers could direct the movements of the Slav nationalities against the revolution mainly because its leadership (the liberal bourgeoisie and gentry) had long refused to grant these peoples their right to autonomy and other democratic

freedoms. Failing to grasp these aspects of the matter and believing in the immediacy of a simultaneous victory of the proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries (which was expected to abolish all social and national oppression), Engels did the most curious things : he, instead of emphasizing the need to recognise, among other freedoms, the Slavic peoples' right to separate national existence, even if to be realized within the broad framework of the need to ensure the victory of democratic revolution, and thereby to win them to its side, overstressed the counter-revolutionary value of the Slavs (to the neglect of the democratic content of their struggles directed against the dominant nations and landlords) and forecast a bleak future for them (which was not confirmed by subsequent developments)<sup>6</sup>. This position, one may argue, inevitably did some 'violence' to the specificities of the class conflicts and their social-political manifestations in the Slav lands of the Austrian empire.

Most generally, however, Marx and Engels never stuck to the conclusions which they arrived at in the context of a particular historical situation, regardless of the changes that situation was undergoing before their eyes. For example, they treated Russia as the principal bastion of European reaction, the greatest foe of European freedom only so long as the masses of the people there appeared sunk in torpor, and the tsarist rulers could maintain the whole system of their foreign policy. The founders of Marxism were in favour of the enrichment of theoretical analysis through constant interaction with practice, with the dynamic process of contemporary history.

In the same process they also changed their views in regard to Ireland. At first they thought that the British workers would be more conscious, more organized and more capable of bringing about a socialist transformation of England as capitalism was more developed and the class contradiction more acute in that country than anywhere else in Europe. The English working class would be not only more revolutionary in their outlook and organization but also more democratic than any other people in the continent. And as such, with the success of their socialist (Chartist) movement in England, they would join hands with the Irish people and make them free. Hence there would be no need for Ireland's separation from England.

But from the mid-fifties on, contrary to these initial expectations, Marx and Engels noticed the decline of Chartism and the increasing domination of the English workers' movement by bourgeois reformism and, on the other hand, the growing strength of Irish liberation struggle in its new radical form (Fenian nationalism). In explaining the weaknesses of English socialism they pointed to the privileged position of England in the international market and, more particularly, the significance of its colonial domination of Ireland and the racist divisions between English and Irish labourers. And for reasons such as these they came to attach in the sixties and seventies primary importance to Ireland's liberation leading to the severance of the colonial nexus that England had with that country : 'the English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland.'<sup>7</sup>

This assertion or the one that the 'lever' of the English revolution had to be applied in Ireland seems to foreshadow the thesis propounded by Lenin decades later, though, in a different context (of colonial and 'backward' countries in general). This context is, however, important. In the new conditions of his time Lenin was to trace the connexions of imperialism with the internal workings of both metropolitan and colonial societies and its effects on the metropolitan proletariat, on the one hand and liberation movements in the colonies on the other. To be sure, he was to advance the thesis in question on this basis. True, in the late fifties Marx became aware of the relation between the imperialistic peculiarities (vast colonial possessions and monopoly position in the world market) of British capitalism and opportunism in the British labour movement but in the absence of a theory of imperialism and proletarian reformism (which he did not live to attempt) it was difficult to explain the failure of the English working class to play its expected role in the strategy of the revolution. True, again, Marx attributed the abomination of the English to the oppression of the Irish and pressed for the political independence of the latter as an indispensable condition for the social emancipation of the former, but he, rightly points out Fernbach (1974 : 28), 'presented this relation ... as a particular case, the product of specific local circumstances'. Though the overseas countries like India and China stood in a similar relation to the capitalist metropolis of England Marx did not attach as much

importance to these colonies as he did to Ireland. This was because England's socio-economic association with Ireland was much older and appeared more important than that with the far-flung colonies, and also because of the close and very immediate connexion between the revolutionary potential of the (mainly agrarian-based) liberation movement in Ireland and the fate of the socialist revolution in England.

Marx's study of the impact of British colonization in India indicates neither the 'civilizing role' of England nor the desirability of passing through this painful process for the colony. Initially he described the process emphasizing the double effects of British colonization—namely, the destruction of the earlier social structure (the uprooting of the native industry, the removal of the investible economic resources, etc.) on the one hand and the incomparably modest growth of a new capitalist economy (the setting up of a network of railways, the development of iron and coal mines, etc.) on the other. In doing these works the British, Marx commented at the time, acted as the 'unconscious tool of history', if not in the Hegelian sense but in the sense that they did not know the unintended consequences of their action. In later years, however, with his awareness of the destructive capacity that capitalism had demonstrated in the colonies including India, Marx spoke in increasingly severe terms of the harmful structural consequences of the British rule for the latter. The doubts he expressed then about its 'regenerative role' (for example, in 1881, about the railways being 'the forerunner of modern industry') are in sharp contrast with his earlier prediction on the same. Broadly, Marx's analysis stresses the need for investigation of the links of Britain imperialism with the internal conditions of the social formation in the colony and their impact on the process of its class formation. When this process had just begun he had some inklings about its significance for the political situation in the country. Though, as mentioned, Marx was never to assign the role same as the Irish to India or any other overseas colony, he understood early that the convulsion or national rebellions produced in the colonies would definitely react back on the capitalist metropolises.<sup>8</sup> Besides, more importantly, Marx did not emphasize doggedly the same pattern of historical development for all countries but, on the contrary, left some hints, however cryptic or imprecise,

as to the prospect of an independent/alternative course of development for 'backward' nations and colonies (e.g. 'Russian socialism' or 'Chinese socialism' in different contexts).<sup>9</sup>

## II

The immediate heirs of Marx and Engels came of age during the long recession in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At the time every sign of the 'final crisis' of capitalism seemed to be visible. The collapse of the old order indeed appeared inevitable and *imminent* and so also the advent of socialism. By the turn of the century the situation changed, however : the long crisis was overcome and a sharp economic upswing in major industrial countries followed. Capitalism had already entered the monopoly stage of its development ; it began to assume a new form, that of 'social capital'. In the situation the hope for an imminent 'breakdown' of the existing social order was to be given up but not necessarily the faith in the *inevitability* of socialism (on the maturity of its conditions in harmony with the ineluctable laws of economic evolution). Though this 'fatalistic' belief in the latter was kept alive, emphasis in practice shifted ; it came to be placed more and more on the short term gains or 'tactics' than on the 'final goal'. Some sort of voluntaristic optimism in matters of politics, or, more precisely, state activity, compensated for the economicistic pessimism. The working class was assigned a 'state framework' of activity and called upon to fight for the immediate material advantages till the achievement, at some future date, of the goal, proletarian revolution, supposedly through this practice.

Understandably, Marxism in the epoch of the Second International (Colletti 1978 : 56ff ; Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer 1978 : 28ff) acquired a peculiar character for the way it was expounded by its leading theoreticians in response to the needs, real or apparent, of the particular conjuncture of the class struggle. Generally, it is said, negligent (or ignorant) of some of Marx's basic writings, the theoreticians of this levy transformed his conception of 'society' into one being governed by the laws of motion exactly similar to those of nature and amenable to formulation in terms of mechanical causation.

In this version of Marxism social change was viewed as an organic process with a predetermined outcome. Thus, for the Marxists of the Second International capitalism would inevitably by 'organic' ('ontological') necessity be replaced by socialism ; this, along with the proletariat's rise to power consequent upon the automatic progress of economic evolution, would come about in a 'spontaneous' and 'irresistable' way like a natural process (like the growth of an avalanche, as Gramsci later remarked with biting sarcasm).

Marxism, as historically constituted in the period, deviated in general towards economism and statism. The most basic and classic form of economism developed in this epoch comprised a base-superstructure model coupled with a 'vulgar and naive conception of the "economy"' (as Colletti put it). Usually the relation between 'economic base' and 'superstructure' was viewed as a simple relation of domination and subordination or in a mode of absolute exteriority or temporal sequence. In fact, despite Marx and Engels' warnings, epiphenomenalism became dominant in endowing the superstructural levels with no effectivity of their own. Closely related to this model was the concept of the 'economic' or the production process itself. The production process was seen not as based on the unity of the productive forces and the (social) relations of production (this unity being realized through the primacy of the latter over the former) but rather as the technological process of the productive forces themselves of which the relations of production were virtually nothing other than a reflection. Underlying this concept of the 'economic' (which results into technicism and determinism) were the assumptions of a separation between the two moments of production, material and social, and of an external, causal relation between them. Further, one of the vital aspects of this problematic of economism is what is called the 'theory of productive forces'. In this theory history was conceived as a succession of modes of production following a preordained sequence in response to the level of development of the productive forces (which appeared 'as a world for themselves, quite independent of and divorced from the individuals, alongside the individuals...whose forces they are') ; it was presented as a universal, 'natural' process involving only linear and irreversible advances. At most class struggle could intervene merely as the

executor of the 'iron laws' of history. According to this theory 'all peoples are fated to tread' the same path of development; none could skip any of its invariant stages. Thus, for each particular people the transition to socialism would of necessity depend on the 'level of maturity' of the development of capitalism which alone could create its material (economic/technical) and cultural preconditions. Contrary to Marx's optimistic prognoses for social revolution in such 'backward' (from the point of view of the 'ripeness' of the productive forces) countries as tsarist Russia, the Second International theorists absolutised the necessity of the 'economic conditions' for socialism gradually to mature and of an allegedly obligatory 'high level' of culture for such transition in those countries. Clearly, then, an explanation in terms of the development of the productive forces and the 'culture level' was substituted for Marx's method of analysis in terms of the specificity of the dialectics of historical contradictions and the class struggles.<sup>10</sup>

This economicistic and evolutionist version of Marxism has its necessary corollary in a *voluntarist* conception of the state. In view of the role being played by the central apparatuses of the state in the monopoly phase of capitalism the Second International ideologues thought this to be a prefiguring of the machinery which the proletariat could capture and use in order to build socialism. The state was seen as the principal instrument of political as well as economic change. So what was considered to be crucial to a socialist party's strategy was the control of state power and manning of its apparatuses ('common' for both capitalism and socialism) by the persons of its choice rather than the destruction of the social relations (internal to production) of which this 'thing' or 'instrument' was itself an integral part. As we would find, given (among other things) the 'state framework' of the activity and the need to preserve it at all costs for the sake of gaining immediate material advantages the major social-democratic parties affiliated to the Second International acquired a *nationalist tendency* in regard to their ruling classes and an *anti-nationalist* (and therefore anti-internationalist) *tendency* towards the peoples oppressed both inside and outside 'their' state.

The impoverishment of revolutionary Marxism, through the interpretations as above of some of its basic tenets in the hands of the

Second International's leading theoreticians, was certainly helped by the vulgarisations of Darwin's theory of evolution<sup>11</sup> and the general spirit of positivism and scientism characteristic of this age. But one cannot explain this phenomenon only by reference to these interpretations and the influence thereon of the dominant bourgeois ideological developments of the time. They can be recognised as 'causative' factors operating through the mediation of the social practice not only of these leaders belonging to the Second International's principal constituent parties but also of the large number of their followers in the ranks of the working class itself.<sup>12</sup> In fact, social democracy and its allied trade unions in major European countries turned into mass organizations eliciting support from millions of workers, and developed within themselves an administrative apparatus capable of conducting negotiations for compromise with the ruling classes, staving off any provocative action leading to a direct confrontation between the workers' movement and the state and, above all, preserving, as the foundation of their movement or 'tactic' the capitalist terrain in tact at the cost of class struggle. In the situation Marxism was gradually transformed into a revolutionary rhetoric which became cover for their day-to-day reformism as well as a guarantee of the fated socialist revolution. All reforms were viewed as contributing 'positively' to this evolution. Under the impact of such practice the influence of the dominant forms of bourgeois thought helped to slur over the crucial differences between Marx's theory and any sort of evolutionism.

In what follows the Second International's stand on the national and colonial question<sup>13</sup> would be found quite congruent with the body of related ideas and practices summed up (their differences notwithstanding) above rather schematically as the Marxism of the period.

Unlike in the last years of the century capitalism had a tranquiller climate of development during the long recession lasting from 1874 to 1894 (after the fall of the Paris Commune and before the outbreak of the first series of inter-imperialist rivalries and conflicts). The years of recession are generally said to be the longest period of relative stability in foreign relations since the rise of capitalism as a world system. By 1870-71 the major capitalist powers had put an

end to the long series of national wars which had hitherto given birth to much tensions in their mutual relations. With the Franco-Prussian war Western Europe, as Lenin said, had been transformed into a 'settled system of bourgeois states' which, as a general rule, took the form of 'nationally uniform states'. The latter were yet to engage in any war for the 'redivision of the world market'. Thus, the national boundaries which they established by means of force or fraud were to last without any major change for about three decades, and to be first disturbed by the outbreak of inter-imperialist rivalries and wars towards the close of the century. At the same time the capitalist system in Europe was comparatively 'trouble-free' internally too in the sense that there was an almost complete absence of national struggles and revolutionary insurrections which had stormed its foundation period from 1789 to 1871 (Foster 1955 : 132-3).

Generally, the Second International, unlike the First (International Working Men's Association), took for granted the existing political divisions in Europe. During its life-time it had shown much less concern than its predecessor for the problems facing the oppressed peoples. In fact interest in the national question diminished after 1871. No great 'disturbances' comparable to those of the earlier period took place in Poland or any other place in Europe to seriously trouble the conscience of the socialist leaders of this continent who dominated the International. The little interest that they still evinced in the affairs of the oppressed peoples was absorbed by such 'civilized' or 'historic' nations as the Poles, and even in such cases it was hardly more than 'perfunctory'.

At the London Congress of the Second International in 1896 the national question came up for discussion. For the Polish socialists and their opponents led by Rosa Luxemburg had in the meantime whipped up a bitter controversy on the issue of the Poles' right to self-determination. While the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) in a resolution asked congress to accept Poland's independence as a necessary political demand for both the Polish and the entire international proletariat, Luxemburg opposed this by all means at her command. To steer a middle course the British delegate George Lansbury proposed, on behalf of the congress commission dealing with the dispute, a compromise resolution which made no mention

of any particular case and, for that matter, of the Polish but only recognized the right of national self-determination in its most general form. In limiting itself to a declaration on this right and against national oppression, the resolution exhorted the workers of all oppressed countries to strive for an alliance with the class-conscious proletarians of the whole world, by implication of the 'advanced' countries, for the victory of socialism which was supposed to bring the end of all oppression, national or otherwise, and thereby secure to its victims the reality of self-determination. Except such a vague promise about their eventual liberation the resolution had nothing else to offer in concrete terms to the subject nations ; for them it remained virtually meaningless and inoperative. And this limitation had its counterpart in the actual positions taken by a number of social-democratic parties belonging to this International on the right of these nations to independence.

For example : Austrian social democracy was against this right being interpreted to mean the freedom of oppressed nations to secede from the oppressor nations and establish separate states of their own.<sup>14</sup> Out of its eagerness to neutralise the danger of political separatism facing the 'historic' Austrian state the party sought to restrict this freedom to what was called 'national-cultural autonomy' (of which Karl Renner and Otto Bauer were the chief-spokesmen). Within the framework dominated by the need to preserve the integrity of this multi-national empire the Austro-Marxists were ready to secure to these national minorities a number of cultural—legal concessions through a subtle and gradual manipulation of the institutional apparatuses of the existing state. From an evolutionist, inter-classist perspective they approached the national question, and divested it of its concrete political meaning and revolutionary significance for the proletarian struggle for emancipation. But basically on account of their reformism and 'social statism' (and, attendant inhibitions about 'momentous decisions' or 'bold action') no better solution could be conceived by them than a fetishised, 'culturalist-juridicist' one which appears, on analysis, nationalist (in regard to the dominant nations and classes) and *anti-internationalist* in essence. By the by, these positions were shared by social democracy not only in Austria-Hungary but also in Russia (by the Bundists and Caucasian social—democrats) and elsewhere.

Besides, the liberation of 'non-historic', 'uncivilized' nations inhabiting Asia and Africa was largely beyond the vision of European social democracy. Most of the working-class leaders in colonizing countries remained too preoccupied with their social demands to pay any close attention to the peoples smarting under the yoke of 'their' fatherlands' rule and domination. They attached exclusive importance to the struggle for such demands and relegated the question of these peoples' liberation to a secondary position. The solution of this question was conceived as being dependent upon the fate of their struggles (which were supposed to pave the way for the eventual victory of socialism in their own countries), and thereby the link between the colonial peoples' national liberation and (internal) social revolution was glossed over. Marx's proposition that 'no social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed' was so interpreted as to lend credibility to the incipient dogma respecting the dependence of socialism on the level of the development of such forces conceived technologically: socialist social order could be ushered in only in the 'advanced' capitalist countries where the developmental potential of the productive forces under the existing relations of production was nearly exhausted and not in the 'backward' colonial and dependent countries where there was enough room for such development within the framework of the social structure that the colonizing nations had imposed.

Thus, after the adoption at London of Lansbury's resolution on the question of national self-determination (which, as mentioned, was often depoliticized and scaled down to a legal-cultural problem) no attempt was made by any subsequent congress of the International to clarify its stand on the matter and link it to the fundamental problems of colonial peoples' liberation other than to pass occasional resolutions ('insipid' in Stalin's words) denouncing colonialism and sympathizing with its victims. Nor anything else could be done by such gathering which used to arrive at decisions through a multiplicity of compromises and collaborations between a number of loosely federated autonomous groups with diverse socialist tendencies (among which the 'rightist' and 'centrist' ones were often dominant). Most of the delegates attending these congresses represented the 'national' parties and trade unions of those European

countries which, it was claimed, had after all 'settled' their national problems (both spatial and temporal). Naturally they could hardly be expected to defend at international gatherings the interests of the colonial and dependent peoples rather than those of the nation-states with which they were increasingly identifying themselves for reasons already stated, though, in most general terms.

As mentioned earlier, towards the close of the nineteenth century the international climate of capitalism was undergoing a change. Monopolization gripped the major industrial nations of Europe, and imperialist expansion accelerated abroad. A tense era of escalating rivalry between the great powers was in the offing. With this the colonial rather than the national question (the two were not yet linked up, and the latter, even in its restricted sense, was considered to be relevant only to a limited number of so-called civilized, historic nations) was to become a theme of recurrent discussion at the congresses of the International.

Marxism as a sort of open 'system' receives enrichment through the interaction of theory and practice. But it may also experience impoverishment in the same process. As European capitalism extended the nexus of its exploitation over the vast stretches of territory in Asia and Africa and the struggle for colonial possessions gained momentum, the international gatherings came to adopt resolutions characterizing colonialism, more precisely, imperialism, as economically a new phase of capitalism and condemning its consequences. In fact, the whole Left and even parts of the Centre and the Right of this International recognized the economic roots of imperialism. There was a possibility that such recognition would have gone a long way towards evolving a concept of proletarian internationalist policy capable of combining the workers' interest in 'advanced' European countries in organizing socialist revolution and that of the 'backward' colonial peoples in throwing off the foreign yoke and asserting their right of self-determination and independent social development. But the social practice in the wake of the rise and expansion of capitalist colonialism prevented this possibility for a time. Thus the colonial question was treated rather unproblematically. Just as national oppression was considered to be a 'function' of social oppression and expected to

vanish along with it, so also conflicts over colonial domination were seen as mere surface manifestations of capitalist power struggles and would end in a similarly unproblematic way. The economics of imperialism was not viewed in its essential links with the basic political problems of the epoch. In fact no serious attempt was made to concretize the overall theoretical assessment of imperialism into a clear recognition of its connexions with the internal workings of both metropolitan and colonial societies, its impact on the unleashing of class forces there, their differentiations and relationships or analysis of the specific conjunctures of their struggles (what Lenin called 'the concrete analysis of a concrete situation'). The working-class leaders, supposed to evaluate the particular historical conjunctures for revolutionary purpose, were in most cases immersed in the political-cultural contexts characteristic of the imperialist powers. Not only so, the masses in metropolitan countries were exposed to the resurgent social opportunism and national chauvinism of the imperialist climax. The symptoms of this disease became manifest in the context of the colonial wars that took place towards the close of the century, and its contamination of the European labour movement was evident in the deliberations of its leaders at party or international gatherings on the question of the attitude to be taken in regard to such wars in particular and the colonial policy generally.

To take a few random examples<sup>15</sup> : The Boer war (1899-1902) divided the sympathies of the socialist and working class leaders in Britain. Many among the Fabians dismissed small nations and 'backward' peoples as obstacles to the forward march of civilization and came to regard the British empire as a potentially civilizing force, despite so many rude words they often uttered about it. The Trades Union Congress which was still in the leadership of the labour movement issued in 1899 a manifesto dealing only with the labour issue involved in the war. The Independent Labour Party, though initially spoke much against imperialism, was not in practical demands far removed from the Fabians most of whom were clearly imperialist in their attitude, and the two increasingly tended to come closer. Edward Bernstein of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) advanced arguments similar to the Fabians'. By the turn of the century he became out and out an advocate of German capitalist interest everywhere, and began writing

in its defence. In his *Evolutionary Socialism* the SPD was criticized for its protest both in the Reichstag and in the press against the forced leasing of the Kiaochow Bay to Germany in 1897 and its condemnation of all colonialism in principle. To be sure, Bernstein was not an isolated individual ; he represented a well-developed, even dominant, tendency in the Party and enjoyed strong support from its intellectuals, trade-union leaders and its South German section. What was wrong with Bernstein in the top leadership's opinion was that impatient with the glaring discrepancy between the party's revolutionary rhetoric and its reformist practice, he hastened to reconcile them and in so doing blurted out what the leadership wanted to be left unsaid.<sup>18</sup> Again, in Germany the colonial question was brought to the fore by the revolts of its south-west and east African colonies, especially the rebellion of the Herero tribe and its brutal suppression by the German colonial rulers in 1904-6. In that connexion, the rightwing leaders of the SPD attacked the 'negative colonial policy' of the party and held it responsible for its electoral setback in 1907. It was openly demanded that the party should henceforth withdraw from the field of foreign policy and leave it to the ruling class in exchange for which the latter could be expected to pay good wages and grant greater political rights to the workers. The centrists, though now expressed surprise over the inroads of jingoistic propaganda in the ranks of the working class, never fought against it seriously in keeping with their much pronounced policy but rather maintained studied silence which certainly helped the chauvinists and dampened the genuine anti-imperialist spirit of criticism in the party. As for social democracy in Belgium, it came to be divided on the question of the annexation of Congo to the Belgian state. When the draft bill on the matter in its final form was placed before parliament in 1906, the party was to decide whether its deputies would vote for the annexation. A majority of its members favoured the transfer of the Congo state to an international consortium composed of the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin (1855), for the natives of the colony, in their opinion, were still in the primitive stages of development and hence the granting of self-government to them would mean handing them over to the caprice of Arab slave-hunters. But a minority, importantly, under the leadership of Vendervelde was opposed to this line, and suggested, in its place, a

'positive colonial policy' : the annexation of the colony to the Belgian government (responsible to a parliament) would be a lesser evil than its transfer to a consortium consisting of capitalist nations free from any parliamentary control. A number of socialist deputies indeed expressed their unwillingness to cast their vote against the annexation, and the party had finally to remind them of defying thereby the principles agreed to by the party and the International. Similarly, differences among the Italian socialists were quite sharp on the colonial question. In 1902 the 'Reformists' captured the leadership of the party and adopted a policy of collaboration with the government in this regard. Two years later they lost the leadership to the 'Integralists' but captured it again in 1908 and thereafter resumed the collaborationist policy with full vigour. The conflict between the two wings culminated in the formation of a separate reformist party by Bissolati, Bonomi and other defenders of colonial policy. And this conflict had its origin in the late 19th Century developments ; it became intense with the Moroccan crisis and continued till the First World War and the open split among the socialists.

As for the International,<sup>17</sup> its London Congress, besides recording its general support for the right of national self-determination, adopted a resolution condemning colonialism as an offshoot of capitalism. A similarly denunciatory motion was passed at the next congress which met in Paris towards the end of September 1900 in the face of the first outbreak of colonial rivalries in the Anglo-Boer war and the intervention in China by the European powers. Even then the conflicts and disagreements among socialists and labour leaders on the colonial question that had been for sometime past brewing up in their intra—and inter-party polemics did not manifest themselves at the international gathering. The rivalries between the imperialist power had not yet sharpened enough to force them to the open sessions of a world congress. The socialist delegates could still join almost unanimously in denouncing colonialism without reservation. But it was no longer to be so at the Amsterdam Congress in 1904. This time the contradictory tendencies came to the surface, though not to an open clash. And it becomes obvious from the reports to the congress, if not its resolutions.

Especially in his report Van Kol, the principal colonial expert from the Netherlands, insisted that the socialists should no more limit

their discussions merely to the question of abolishing colonialism for ever but rather should devote them to the formulation of a 'positive' colonial policy of reforms. For him it was not at all bad for a people to be colonized under any circumstances. On the contrary, the colonial rule was necessary and welcome for the development of backward', 'inferior' races as well as for the utilization of their material resources by the 'advanced', 'superior' races in the interest of all humanity. Van kol ruled out the possibility of the capitalist stage of development being bypassed in the colonial world. His was an openly racist and grotesque version of the unilinearist theory according to which the west European path of development was of necessity to be trudged by all societies (Mellotti 1977 : 16 2n). The report in question went to the extent of asserting that even the socialist society of the future would require colonial possessions for the 'economic emancipation' of the working class. Hence the need for reforming rather than abandoning colonialism for ever. The colonial commission of the Amsterdam Congress indeed made an attempt to formulate a comprehensive', 'socialist' colonial policy, and, interestingly, that was not questioned or debated on the floor of the plenary sessions as was expected by many. The Congress, as usual, endorsed a number of resolutions (including Van kol's) on colonialism short of any basic analysis of this phenomenon or, relatedly, of militarism and their connexions with imperialism as a stage of capitalism. Except its attempt at a socalled detailed socialist reform programme for the colonies, its results were much the same as those of the Paris Congress.

The contradictory tendencies that remained hidden in the proceedings of the colonial commission at Amsterdam came to an open clash at the Stuttgart Congress in 1907. It was there that the invisible links between revisionism and colonialism were exposed. In the years that intervened between the two congresses the rivalries and conflicts among the European powers for colonial possessions in Asia and Africa intensified further. By the time the colonial question became a moot point among the major socialist parties in the continent ; it exacerbated their internal schisms, and even caused dissensions within some of them. The reactions of these parties or fractions thereof to the colonial adventures of their respective governments varied, and these exposed them in true colours. The internal

controversies they were engaged in at the time had definitely spill-over effects on the deliberations of international gathering at Stuttgart. In fact, both within its commission and at the plenary session their delegates were sharply divided and had heated exchange on the problems that the colonial wars and armed race between the big powers had forced to the front.

The colonial commission of the Stuttgart Congress initiated a discussion on Van Kol's resolution which was intended to substitute a 'positive colonial policy' for the 'purely negative' one so long upheld by the International. A majority of the commission members intervened in its support and finally endorsed it for the congress. This apart, the Congress received another motion signed by Ledebour (Germany) and others who were dead against the former but were in the minority in the commission. At the plenary session the 'majority' resolution was defended by Edward David (Germany) and Bernstein, besides its author, Van Kol. On the other hand, Karski (pseudonym of the Polish social-democrat J. Marchlewski) attacked it from the left and Karl Kautsky from the centre.

Clearly, the colonial commission was so constituted that the opportunist elements headed by Van Kol had an upper hand in its proceedings. They openly denounced the anti-colonialism of the previous congresses and advocated, in its place, a policy emphasising the historical inevitability and necessity of colonies and proposing certain steps for colonial reform. Against this opportunist offensive a determined minority fought quite relentlessly, and advanced arguments exposing the hollowness of their opponents' reasoning. Further, when the matter was put up for decision at the plenary session, the forces behind these opposite trends turned out to be nearly equal (108 votes cast in favour of the retention of the paragraph containing the statement on 'socialist colonial policy' in the 'majority' resolution and 128 against it with ten abstentions). At Stuggart David took an extreme right position. In the right of the Centre were Van Kol and Terwagne (Belgium) aided by Bernstein, Rouanet (France) and others. Certainly there were differences among them but nevertheless they all stood behind Van Kol on the question of colonial policy (Davis 1967 : 130-1).<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, these supporters of the 'positive' colonial policy were mostly delegates from the European

colonial powers with the exception of the representatives of Russia. The majority of the British and French votes and almost all votes of Germany, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Denmark and South Africa were cast for the so-called socialist colonial policy. Those who rejected the crass opportunism of the colonial commission majority were from Russia, Japan, the United States and small European countries or other nations suffering from colonial oppression. (Dutt 1964 : 110 ; Cole 1956 : 71 ; Giankin and Fisher 1960 : 51).

Analysing the voting pattern Lenin observed : the vote of the delegates from the nations possessing colonies (which was outweighed by the vote of the nations either pursuing no colonial policy or being a victim of the same) clearly revealed that they, including their proletariat, had been 'somewhat infected with the lust of conquest'. It strikingly showed up social opportunism which succumbed to bourgeois blandishments. As early as 1907, in these comments on the Stuttgart Congress, Lenin emphasized the negative tendencies in European labour movement which would do no little harm to its cause, leading eventually to an open crisis with the outbreak of the Great War. It was pointed out that as a result of colonization the European worker 'partly finds himself in a position when it is not his labour, but the labour of the practically enslaved natives in the colonies, that maintains the whole of society'. In certain countries, for example, Great Britain, the 'superprofit' earned at the expense of colonial peoples was said to have provided the material and economic basis for corrupting the metropolitan proletariat with colonial chauvinism. The voting split at Stuttgart certainly attracted the attention of the left radicals to this evil of social opportunism but, generally, they were yet to trace its root in the social practice in an imperialist milieu and draw concrete lessons from the same in the context of their labour movement.

Indeed, in the wake of the rapid imperialist expansion abroad the social-democrats in metropolitan countries, especially the rightists among them, were found supporting covertly or openly the colonial policies of their respective national bourgeoisie. Generally, it became obvious to the labour leaders that the metropolitan proletariat, precisely, certain strata within it, by virtue of their special position,

skill, organizational strength, etc., could exact from the bourgeoisie, under the given economic circumstances, concessions, even if only in the form of relaxation of pressures on their wages which the latter, deprived of any outside outlet for its capital, would probably have taken recourse to. To win these concessions for themselves and attempt, for the purpose, at establishing some sort of a stable, institutional monopoly over employment in a certain section of the labour market, these strata, as argues Martin Nicolaus (1970 : 95-6, 97), must exclude competition, for example, from the workers of other nationality, race, culture or some other social category, and in so doing, appropriate to themselves the 'principles' on which the structure of imperialist exploitation was based. This implied their acceptance, on the one hand, of the oppression of other nationalities or analogous social groups within the working class and the overall hegemony of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the metropolis itself and, on the other hand, of the maintenance of the similar rule and domination over all territories, colonial possessions and dependencies within the entire imperial sphere. That is, towards other oppressed nationalities both within the metropolis and outside they must be *antinationalist*, while towards the imperialist bourgeoisie, *nationalist*. The petty-bourgeois party intellectuals too realized this. Thus, though at the earlier congresses of the International the leaders of European social democracy maintained in common a 'negative' attitude towards colonization both on 'humanitarian grounds and because the enterprise appeared to profit only the bourgeoisie', its right-wing section abandoned it altogether by the turn of the century when it began to subscribe to the view that the whole population of Europe, including the proletariat, could live better thanks to the perpetuation of European 'civilizing mission' in the colonies (d'Encausse and Schram 1969 : 15). As mentioned, the tendency to support a 'positive' colonial policy' on the part of these social opportunists became manifest particularly at the Congresses of 1904 and 1907.

Most of the social-democratic parties belonging to the Second International formally embraced Marxism which, however, did not prevent their right-wing members from moving in an opportunist direction in matters of both theory and practice. The leaderships, especially the organization-minded ones, always tried to smooth over

real issues and controversies under the garb of revolutionary rhetoric and happily lived with and condoned base opportunism in practice. These opportunist elements often came to dominate the leading sections of the International. Of course, the revolutionary left conducted vigorous fight against the opportunist offensive and sometimes scored victory over them as, for example, at Stuttgart in rejecting the motion calling for a 'socialist colonial policy'. Besides, the 'Marxist Centre' under the leadership of Karl Kautsky occupied a prestigious position in theoretical matters in the International. Sometimes it fought alongside the Left, perhaps, to maintain the facade of its 'orthodox Marxism' (Dutt 1964 : 121). But usually the Centre preferred to cooperate with the right-wing for the sake of preventing the split that was inevitable and welcome for the development of a clear and determined revolutionary line or preserving the unity that was a sham. It dared not appear what it really was<sup>19</sup> till its 'mission', the triumph of social opportunism over Marxism, was fulfilled (Lukacs 1972 : 128 ff). At the Stuttgart Congress the centrists seemed to join hands with the Left in the latter's fight against the naked colonialism of the Commission majority and endorse the 'minority' motion in favour of the traditional condemnation of the atrocities in the colonies. Kautsky attacked the capitalist colonial policy and found it opposite of a 'civilizing policy' (he of course admitted the necessity of the latter). Likewise the idea of 'socialist colonialism' was denounced as self-contradictory. But all this he did mainly on ethical and humanitarian grounds. Neither here on this occasion nor anywhere else he was known to have suggested any concrete step to eradicate the influence of opportunist, collaborationist elements either from the International or from its constituent parties. And as this tended to favour the dominant wing, the International was to count for very little as an effective anti-imperialist force.

As hinted earlier, there was a conflict, latent or manifest, between the social-democratic parties of Western Europe concerned with the immediate amelioration of the conditions of their working classes and the peoples of the colonial world faced with the primary task of national liberation and the simultaneous implementation of a democratic programme somewhat analogous to that of the 1848 revolution. The former solely concentrated on their own social

issues and saw the latter's emancipation as too unproblematic. The socialists of the 'advanced' industrial countries, both reformists and radicals, were guilty of sharing a basic disregard for the national question facing the 'backward' colonial countries (Boersner 1957 : 29). It was widely believed at the time that the liberation of colonial peoples would be possible only in the wake of a proletarian revolution in the west. The rightists like Van Kol, David and Bernstein considered colonialism part of the civilizing mission of the European bourgeoisie. Kautsky who seemed to argue (from the Centre) against this line also treated the colonial peoples as the *passive* victims of imperialism. Even the Leftists like Rosa Luxemburg and Marchl weski, despite their 'practical break' (which was yet to be consciously formulated) with the reformists, believed that the fate of the colonial peoples was dependent on the success of the European proletariat. The notion that a working-class revolution in 'advanced' countries would automatically abolish national oppression was later denounced by Lenin as 'ludicrous' and 'imperialist economism'. Notwithstanding its denunciations, several times, of colonialism, sometime even in the face of opposition by a section openly demanding a 'socialist colonial policy', the International may be said to have remained on the whole apathetic to the problems and aspirations of the colonial and dependent peoples and failed to anticipate significance of their liberation struggles for the world proletarian movement. It was unable to suggest any concrete strategy for utilizing the revolutionary possibilities existing in the colonial world and set any alternative perspective for the individual development of the peoples from the social standpoint. The bifurcation of interests of its principal parties belonging to the 'advanced' metropolises and those of the 'backward' colonial countries became quite prominent by the close of the century, particularly through the deliberations of the Congresses of 1904 and 1907. This bifurcation stands, on the one hand, as the precursor of the later-day pseudo-proletarian internationalism having no or only fleeting embodiments in real movements of undermining their national materiality and marks, on the other hand, the beginning of a counter (internationalist)-tendency evident in such movements in metropolitan as well as colonial countries.

## III

Rosa Luxemburg's analysis of the problems involving the national question harbours sources of errors in her conception of proletarian internationalism. The foremost among these, as Michael Lowy (1977 : 143) points out, lay hidden in her very approach to the problem of Polish independence. For over two decades, beginning from 1893 till the outbreak of the world war, Luxemburg examined the case for the Poles' right to political self-determination from an 'economist' standpoint. The argument that Poland was economically dependent on Russia and therefore could not be politically independent stemmed from her tendency to overemphasize the economic aspect of the question and, as a corollary, to overlook or underestimate the importance of its political aspect. It underlines a notion of historical materialism with a dominant economist-determinist streak which, as we have seen, was rather typical of the Marxism of the Second International. This economist-determinist tendency was particularly evident in Luxemburg's doctoral dissertation 'The Industrial Development of Poland' (1897), her foreword to the anthology 'The Polish Question and the Socialist Movement' (1905) and also in one of her series of articles entitled 'The National Question and Autonomy' (1908-9). It was asserted that the development of capitalism which chained Poland to Russia by economic ties proved, 'with the inevitability of the iron laws of history', the Utopian character of the aspirations for Polish independence, and simultaneously underpinned the need for unity in the struggle of the Polish and Russian proletariat. On her investigation of the industrial development of Poland Luxemburg took these implications for granted. Lowy cited a striking example of this 'unmediated assimilation' of politics to economics from her article 'The Acrobatics of the Social-Patriots' Programme' written in 1902. There she emphasized that the economic tendency —'and therefore' political tendency—was for union with Russia. The phrase 'and therefore' is an expression of the lack of mediation ; the tendency for union is not shown in depth in all its aspects, but simply taken to be self-evident. For advancing a similar line of argument Lenin later accused the Polish social-democrats of 'economism' and 'caricaturing' Marxism.

While opposed to the idea of Polish independence and the

RSDLP (Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party) formula of self-determination, Luxemburg was not altogether indifferent to the oppression of one nation by another. But she tended *a la* the Second International Marxists to consider it too unproblematically, to see it as a consequence or function of the rule of capital, and believed that after the achievement of the socialist revolution the problem would solve itself, as socialism by definition was supposed to lay the economic foundation for the abolition of all classes and thereby all forms of oppression. To this view the 'Rozlomovists' (the Regional Presidium of the Social Democracy of Poland and Lithuania) struck quite obstinately. But can socialism be reduced to the economic alone or can the latter be separated from the political? The socialist revolution might create the economic prerequisites for the abolition of national oppression but even then would these lead directly or immediately to the political solution expected or, more precisely, would this oppression vanish automatically?—if not, how to eliminate it? The implementation of democracy all along the line (the organization of the state, demarcation of state frontiers, etc., along this line) was necessary for the elimination of national or any other type of oppression. That was Lenin's argument against Luxemburg's followers.

Luxemburg time and again stressed that the Polish proletariat could not take upon itself the task to recreate Poland as a nation-state, the task which the nobility had abandoned and the bourgeoisie made impossible through its development; it could only fight for the preservation of the Polish national cultural heritage, and that too could be done through the struggle to overthrow the tsarist despotism and establish an all-Russian republic with cultural and national autonomy for Poland. To all other peoples oppressed by Russia this, Luxemburg believed, would bring cultural autonomy and, for that matter, local self-government. This solution implies substitution of cultural-national autonomy for political self-determination (the latter being necessary for the preservation of these peoples' differential spatiality and temporality). And herein lies one of Luxemburg's most curious errors. Like Otto Bauer she took the nation as essentially cultural phenomenon, and stripped it of its political content (i.e., an independent nation-state which, according to Lenin, is 'typical' and normal for the modern period). Even when in her

introduction to the 1905 reader Luxemburg eloquently denounced national oppression and called for the defence of the national identity, she had in mind only the question of 'cultural legacy', she was loath to say that national identity could best be defended by the struggle for political self-determination. In one of her articles of the 1908-9 series Luxemburg, though spoke in favour of 'freedom of cultural existence' of Lithuania and the Caucasus, still denied their right to separation by 'barriers of national autonomy'. She did not realize that this denial was objectively tantamount to the appeasement of oppression by the Great Russians. Despite the fact that Luxemburg never wavered in her revolutionary zeal or sincerity in opposing the tsarist state, her stand on the question under discussion was susceptible to misinterpretation : one could draw out a reformist implication from her outright denial of the right to self-determination (including secession) of the peoples oppressed by the tsarist state and reduction of this vital question to one of granting 'cultural autonomy'.

Even in her work on imperialism Luxemburg did not make any methodological break and her argument remained, in the main, reductionist. She placed too exclusive an emphasis on one aspect of capitalist development, i.e. the 'realisation problem' arising from the reproduction process and the necessity to seek new, non-capitalist sectors for its solution, and so the many-sidedness and contradictory tendencies of this development remained untraced. As Lukacs (1977 : 41-2) said, she, unlike Lenin, failed to articulate in concrete terms the relation of the economics of imperialism with the basic political problems of the epoch and thereby make the former a guideline for concrete action in the given conjuncture. Luxemburg's analysis cannot be said to suffer from economism in the narrow sense of the term, in the sense of simply separating the economics of imperialism from its politics, because the moment of transformation of one to the other was stressed by it. But this was oversimplified, made too mechanical and direct. In other words, the connection between the economics and politics of imperialism was not presented in all their mediacies and links. How, as a result of the process of accumulation the transition to imperialism became inevitable and how this epoch was bound to be one of wars were shown. And in showing this Luxemburg produced in her characteristic manner an

one-sided view of this phenomenon. The reason she provided for events like militarism, nationalism, racialism, etc., given rise to or intensified by this phenomenon proceeded along a single (oversimplified and mechanical, economic) track. Politics was assumed to be 'nothing but a vehicle for the economic process', and relatedly, the ideological context was lost sight of, together with the interconnectedness of all such factors. Luxemburg's assessment of the epoch throws little or no light on the related complex of questions facing it, such as the connexions of imperialism (apart from its association with the realization of surplus value) with the internal workings of both metropolitan and colonial societies, its effect on the formation of social classes there, their differentiations and relationships, etc. The proofs are as follows. First, as Tom Kemp (1967 : 61, 62, 158) pointed out, the kind of internal developments with which Lenin started his analysis, namely, concentration and monopoly, were not discussed or their connection with imperialism examined. For these were not considered to be so important as a driving force, making it especially necessary to seek outside outlet for the realization of surplus value or as affecting, in any fundamental way, the question of accumulation. The undue emphasis on one facet of the complicated process resulted in the underestimation of the importance of the export of capital, and, in turn, of the extraction of 'surplus' from the colonies and semi-colonies of these metropolises. Besides, one of the significant results of imperialism in the home country was its role in the reproduction of divisions within the working class, especially 'national' or 'racial' ones, which played a large part in the redrawing of the division between 'skilled/high wage' and 'unskilled/low wage' workers or aggravation of the social distancing between them. The working class was not merely exposed to the economic influence of imperialism but also to the political and ideological one, and the transmission of these influences deep inside their class movement was facilitated not merely by reformist leaders alone but crucially by a fairly considerable number among them. This aspect of the matter having its effect on the concrete political situation in imperialist metropolises and the question of class alignment there did not find any place in Luxemburg's study under discussion. The proletariat seemed to be one and indivisible, and differentiations within it therefore remained unnoticed. Often she employed ideological

terms, such as petty-bourgeois mentality, national chauvinism, etc., to account for the treason of the leaders. Even in her principled attacks on revisionism in the SPD she could not offer any clear explanation for the origins of the opportunist trend and trace its role in the party practice. For example, in *Social Reform or Revolution* her main emphasis was on the need to defend the established 'orthodoxy' in the party against Bernstein's revisions and deny his claim to be a spokesman for a well-developed, and even dominant, tendency inside it (a spokesman intent upon bringing party theory into line with its practice, demanding that the SPD should dare to appear as a 'democratic socialist party of reform'). Second, Luxemburg, in her analysis of imperialism, takes the non-capitalist societies into which capitalism expands as essentially static ; she does not seriously consider the internal workings of these societies and the complexity of their articulation with the former and the resultant class structure and, more crucially, of the relation between this combination and the national and social liberation of the people there. Negligent especially of the link between imperialist oppression and national struggles in colonial and semi-colonial countries, she was unable to see through the necessary connection of these struggles with the anti-capitalist movement in imperialist metropolises and their importance in the strategy of world revolution. Third, Luxemburg seems to be in direct line of descent from Marx (of the *Communist Manifesto*) in her emphasis on the (economic) tendencies of capitalism making for the breakdown of national barriers and the unification of the world. As we know, in the *Manifesto* its authors were in the grip of an all-encompassing revolutionary vision of the 'levelling' effects of the march of capitalism on different parts of the world, especially of the establishment of the world market tending to lessen national differences between them. At the moment Marx and Engels were less mindful of the counter-tendencies or the possibility of their rise or sharpening in future. Though Luxemburg was aware of some of the obstacles which the internationalist tendency meets to the present epoch, such as imperialist rivalries and wars, her analysis on the whole did not attach any importance to the facts : the 'blocking' of the productive forces or their development especially in the 'backward', dominated countries (by the specific combination of *internal* production relations with the *external* ones, including political and

ideological [Bettelheim 1972 : 289 ff.], the unevenness of such development throughout the world, and, above all, given this unevenness, the possibility for revolution to develop not simultaneously but in one country after another, as breaks occurred at the 'weakest links' in the imperialist chain, that is, 'backward' dominated countries, subject to the concrete conditions existing in each of them. As we would find, Luxemburg's theory of imperialism virtually turns into a theory of the 'strongest link', as it rejects the importance of revolutionary national-liberation movements in 'backward', colonial countries or makes their future dependent upon the fate of the proletarian revolution in 'advanced' capitalist metropolises.

In fact, Luxemburg, out of her fear of Polish nationalism, combated virulently and in an almost obsessive manner the democratic principle of self-determination of oppressed nations recognized particularly by the Russian social-democrats at the 1903 congress of their party. The long protracted ideological battle that she had to conduct in order to guard against the nascent proletarian movement being contaminated by the virus of PPS chauvinism prejudiced her entire attitude to the national question. She was inclined too much to generalize a policy which might have been correct in the case of Poland but not so everywhere else. Luxemburg's prediction about the danger of PPS social-patriotism was proved correct by the conduct of many of its leaders during the 1905 Russian revolution and, again, by the reactionary dictatorship of Pilsudski and his 'Colonels' after 1921 (Frolich 1972 : 30, 31), but often she tended to jumble together the (narrow) nationalistic attitude of the PPS right-wing with the attitudes of the PPS Left and ultimately of the Russian Bolsheviks (Netil 1966 : II : 853). Lenin recognized many times the great historic merit of Rosa Luxemburg and her comrades in their fight against the nationalist opponents who held fast to the words of Marx and Engels without grasping their spirit, and observed that the correct policy for the Polish social-democrats might be at the present moment not to raise the demand for secession from Russia but to strive for a fighting alliance with the Russian working-class. But as members of an oppressing nation the Russian social-democrats, cautioned Lenin, could not repeat the same policy, they could not deny the right of Poland, Finland, the Ukraine or any

other oppressed, dominated nation to secession. He was rightly wary in case such a denial should provide grist to the mill of Great Russian chauvinism. Certainly, Lenin wanted his party to vigorously campaign for the right of self-determination including secession on behalf of the 57 per cent of the non-Russian peoples living in the tsarist prison-house of nations, but he never pressed for a similar line of action by every other fraternal party. He never thought of blaming the Polish social-democrats for being opposed to the secession of Poland but these people, in his opinion, erred when, following in the footsteps of Luxemburg, they denied the necessity of this right being recognized in the programme of the Russian Marxists. To Lenin the policy formulated with an eye to the specific conditions in Poland at a particular time seemed unacceptable when the same stuff, though couched in general terms, was advanced as solution of the problems facing other nations.

Although *The Junius Pamphlet* categorically said that real self-determination could be realized only under socialism, its author later attacked the Bolsheviks when they proclaimed this principle within the framework of a revolution which set socialism as its goal. The Bolshevik national policy, Luxemburg sincerely believed, was disastrous, and could only lead to the destruction of the revolution. She was proved wrong. It was partly by guaranteeing self-determination, up to and including the right of secession, that the Bolsheviks won the support of the oppressed nations which contributed largely to the victory of the revolution. Bogged down on her predilection for 'all—or nothing positions' Luxemburg could not grasp the need for the kind of flexibility and adjustment in both policy and action required to carry out such a revolution in a country like Russia. In fact, she over-stressed the proletarian character of the revolution and failed to make a correct assessment of its non-proletariat allies, namely, the peasants, the oppressed nations, etc. (Lukacs 1971 : 274-5 ; Kemp 1978 : 91). Unlike Lenin she subscribed to an '*ouvrierist*' ('*workerist*') conception of the socialist revolution, and could not realize that the 'lonely hour' of such a 'pure' socialist revolution was never to come in one's lifetime.

Generally, Luxemburg preferred to ignore from the outset the struggles of the small oppressed nationalities inhabiting tsarist

Russia. In fact she spoke of them with the same dislike as did Engels when he referred to the small national groups in the Habsburg empire. This was clearly evident in her article for *Die Neue Zeit*, 1905 viz., 'Das Problem der "hundret Voker"' (Herod 1976 : 87). As mentioned earlier, Luxemburg was in favour of national autonomy, that is, provincial self-government, for Poland and of freedom of cultural development and local autonomy for other national groups in Russia ; she was willing to go this far but no farther in the direction of national self-determination. Her opposition to this right (especially of the small nationalities in Eastern Europe, was so strong and persistent that after the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 she viewed the national movements like that of the Ukraine as a 'mere whim, a folly of a few dozen petty-bourgeois intellectuals'; 'ridiculous pose of a few university professors and students', and advocated nipping in the bud such separatist movements. Though all independence efforts of small nations were not condemned outright (for instance, her sympathy for the cause of the peoples fighting for liberation in the Balkans) Luxemburg's attitude towards national movements was on the whole hostile.

The reasons for this hostility are many. One was that Luxemburg had in mind only the petty-bourgeois reactionary aspects of national movements, and did not understand that the revolutionary, democratic content of the struggles directed against national oppression demanded support from the proletariat just as the movements of the peasants fighting for land did. It was erroneously assumed that the policies concerning nationalities problem appropriate to the advanced stage of capitalism were of universal application. The facts of the differential rates of development in different countries and, relatedly, differences between these countries in respect of the state of the national question or its objective significance were simply ignored (Harding 1977 : 299). Virtually no attention was paid to the dialectics of uneven development and the revolutionary liberation struggles by colonial peoples in the era of imperialism. Like many other socialists of her time and before Luxemburg seriously believed in the theory of 'strongest links' based on productive forces determinism : 'Only from Europe, only from the oldest capitalist nations...can the signal come for the social revolution that will free the nations. Only the English, the French, the Belgian, the German, the Russian, the

Italian workers together, can lead the army of the exploited and oppressed. And when time comes they alone can call capitalism to account for centuries of crimes committed against primitive peoples, they alone can avenge its work of destruction over a whole world.' (Luxemburg 1967 : 81). So to Luxemburg there seemed to be only one possibility, the possibility for social revolution to develop first in a number of most 'advanced' capitalist countries and that, in turn, making for the abolition of all exploitation and oppression. Such was the kind of promise that she could hold out before the 'primitive', colonial peoples, an unhelpful and meaningless promise indeed. Understandably, for this reason, Luxemburg never looked for any revolutionary potential in the struggles of these peoples nor ever thought of any prospect of their independent revolutionary development or of their contributions to the upsurge of international proletarian movement. This totally 'eurocentric' view was in sharp contrast with Lenin's recognition of the awakening of the 'backward' East. Unlike Luxemburg he understood quickly the revolutionary significance of liberation struggle in the colonies ; he was also aware that the force of nationalism was far from spent and reactionary in those areas of Europe where capitalism was still in its early stages of development. While the former disposed of the question of national self-determination as being incompatible with socialism, the latter judged the issue from the standpoint of the requirements of class struggle, and wanted to tackle it in the same way as he tried to forge all other democratic strivings into a weapon in the revolutionary movement for socialism. It goes to his credit that he first fully comprehended the dialectical unity of the struggles of oppressed nations for liberation and the proletarian movement for the achievement of its class goal.

As against her opponents Luxemburg was of course correct in thinking that the mere application of the 'stock, general conclusions' of the Marxian analysis of bourgeois society to any particular case like that of Poland was not sufficient ; it was necessary to take into account the country's specific, concrete features at the given time. Generally, she was against any attempt to take over the works of Marx and Engels as an authoritative body of readymade solutions or elevate them to the status of rigid canon law and to defend it (as a closed system of truths) in spite of changed conditions or use the same as a

source for proving the legitimacy of one's position. Luxemburg's expressed wish was to capture in her work the real spirit of their theories by adopting a critical attitude towards them and retain the 'Kernel', the method of their historical analysis. Nevertheless the mechanical quality of her interpretation of historical materialism becomes obvious. In fact, one could bring in the same charge no less reasonably against her, which she levelled against Marx and Engels in her assessment of their positions on the problems involving the national question : 'The method did not keep them from making a faulty evaluation of the situation or taking a wrong position in certain cases.' Especially Luxemburg's tendency to generalise too much from her solution of the Polish problem can be cited as an example.

Even in regard to Poland Luxemburg, observed Lelio Basso (1975 : 117-8), was led astray, and ignored certain aspects of reality which, though expected to disappear eventually, were very much present and active at the time, such as for instance the strength of national feeling in the minds of the Poles. She was generally inclined to throw the small nations, the petty-bourgeoisie peasants on the 'dialectical rubbish bin' of history, because the broad trends of capitalist development and especially the need to overcome pre-capitalist phases, sectors and ideologies were crucial to her consideration. In consequence Luxemburg or her party was practically in danger of losing touch with large sections of the Polish masses. Out of her anxiety to maintain the purity of the socialist strategy in Poland and its neighbouring countries, or, more precisely, to keep the proletariat there from being distracted off the path of class struggle by national sentiments, she tended to underplay the role in large popular movements of such super-structural values resting on the materiality of the constitution and struggles of the popular classes and relating to the genuinely class aspects of their ideology.

Nettl (1966 : II, 861, 862) explains this position, saying that 'Rosa Luxemburg transferred all the energies and satisfactions of patriotic consciousness to class consciousness — to the working class ... She, more than any other Marxist, succeeded in transposing her *loyalties* from *nation* to *class* — in tact.' In this context the famous biographer poses the question whether it is possible to

become a Marxist without not only substituting class consciousness for patriotic consciousness but also achieving 'an immersion in class *instead* of nation'. This seems to be a wrong way of putting the matter. For a Marxist 'immersion' in one does not always mean the exclusion of the other or their counterposition in absolute terms. One may cut across or coincide with the other as against the neat separation above emanating from an unreconstructed idealist notion of the categories in question. In fact, consciousness on the part of the working class and popular masses of their differential spatiality and temporality or, more concretely, of the need to defend their territory and history against the onslaught of the bourgeoisie and other dominant classes, against the latter's constant efforts to obliterate other spatial and temporal matrices, eradicate the embryos of another nation and thereby establish their monopoly over everything 'national', does not go against the requirements of the former's class practice or consciousness of the same. But the contrary. To be a good revolutionary is necessary to grasp this aspect of the matter in orienting both policy and action in this regard. For him proletarian internationalism does not mean a commitment to a pre-given supranational or anational essence demanding undialectical consistency (in thought and action in opposing nationalism irrespective of the spatio-temporal context) but it rather consists in contributing actively to real movements rooted in differential national materiality.

Rosa Luxemburg may be said to have neglected the Marxist instruction that changes are to be sought, not those which appear to be in the best interests of the international proletariat (supposedly having an existence and substance prior to its being constituted in concrete national forms) or consistent with the tenets of its internationalism following therefrom, but which are in conformity with the logic of the contemporary historical situation and, above all, the national specificities of the constitution and struggles of the working classes in different countries. Of course, Luxemburg's internationalism has its strength : it lies in her relentless fight against the danger of Polish social-patriotism (chauvinism) and of its corrupting influences on the proletariat. The revolutionary value of her internationalist position notwithstanding, it suffered from weaknesses which stemmed from her underestimation of national reality.

## IV

The problems of proletarian internationalism (the idea finds its most emphatic expression in the slogan 'workers of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite') originate from the divisive loyalties of different human groups and communities with different conflicting interests and social-cultural backgrounds, passing through different stages of historical development and inhabiting different politically demarcated parts or sometimes the same part of the world. These problems arise not in the course of abstract humanitarian discourse but in the course of actual movement, the actual process of organising toiling peoples and mobilising them in the fight against the oppressive systems they were confronted with, as part of the overall struggle for the abolition of capitalism as a world system, as an international order. For Marxism is not only a theory of 'societies' but also a theory of revolutionary struggle, nay, it is a theory of societies that arises from the necessity of such struggle and, at the same time, serves as its vehicle.

This theory which is based on the dialectical-materialist method of historical analysis teaches one to tackle issues, considering both the specific context in which they arise and the whole situation of which the specific context is a part. It ignores neither the relations between the part and the whole nor the relations between parts within the whole nor even the relations between the part and itself (its differential forms, its differential times). Instead of viewing parts as static and independent, it emphasizes their movement and interconnections. It points not only to their simple interactions but also to their contradictions with each other. Its concept of such relations does not indicate mutual and reciprocal actions of equal magnitude or of equal importance. Rather, as mentioned, it looked into the hierarchy of differential relative importance of different contradictions in the totality of such contradictions within a framework of specific time and space. It prompts one to look for the unifying structure or relation that sustains or encompasses these contradictions. It views motion as the process of origination and resolution of contradictions. It considers no contradiction to be final, it knows no finality, as finality goes against the dynamics of a developing human society.

Broadly, these principles of historical materialism seem to provide the theoretical underpinning for Lenin's analysis of the national question. He could not accept the Austro-Marxist formulations on the question because they viewed the nation as a primary and eternal datum, nationality as essentially cultural and national-cultural difference as an ever-lasting fact of social life. To Lenin this appeared to be a static and reformist analysis. The nation is, in fact, product of specific historical evolution, which did not take its present shape at the dawn of civilization nor could this be expected to last for all time to come. The same is the case with national-cultural difference. Lenin unravelled the dialectics of conflict and unity, difference and similarity of interests involved in the question from a dynamic historical perspective. While indicating the national-cultural difference as the product of specific evolution of a specific social formation, he pointed to the similarity of interests of the working peoples in different countries in the overthrow of their respective oppressors and their allies. He pointed to the historical tendency of capitalism to become world-wide (because of its economic, political and ideological mechanisms) and also to the parallel tendency towards international solidarity (as manifested in organized contacts, exchange of experience, etc.) in the struggle of the toiling peoples against capitalism on a world scale. These tendencies, he believed, were eventually to lead to or create necessary conditions for the removal of national barriers and isolations between peoples that once fostered national-cultural diversities.<sup>20</sup> If socialism ushers in higher, qualitatively different relations of production that permit the fullest development of the productive forces, then the centralising integrative force that tends to unite people under capitalism would get further momentum under it.<sup>21</sup> Lenin expected this to be so, but finally he did not want to bring about the theoretically expected revolutionary changes by any short-cut plan. Rather he modelled his plan on the basis of the 'logic' of the specific historical development in Russia. He was against the imposition of an integrative structure that would unify peoples with different national backgrounds by force before they realized the necessity of coming together. That is why he relentlessly fought for the right of secession of the peoples with special economic and social conditions, a distinct 'national make-up' etc. The guarantee of this right may help remove the major cause

of distrust and alienation among these peoples and make them free to unite. The unconditional recognition of this extremely divisive right of secession may be found to possess the opposite possibility of giving rise to the will to unite among peoples with diverse national-cultural backgrounds. It is this dialectic that persuaded Lenin to reject any idea of centralism that did not offer the right of secession. While in favour of this right he was at the same time eager to organize the working man belonging to different nationalities in Russia in single, united proletarian organizations (he did not find any contradiction between the two, because for him the question of the democratic right could not be divorced from that of the class struggle). This effort, if effective, Lenin believed, would help in the unfolding of the historical process which impels peoples with divisive loyalties to unite. The initiative to unite the workers of all nationalities in a given state should come from a proletarian party which, as a unifying force, could not have a federative structure formed on the basis of the exclusionary principles of religion, culture, race or sex. Thus, the workers and oppressed peoples of a multi-national state could unite together, not when the party or its leadership (in power) wants them to, but when concrete efforts are made to create the basis for a desire to unite among them in accordance with the 'logic of historical development'. When peoples with diverse national background themselves feel the necessity of unity, that unity, once achieved, lasts and fosters the development of real international brotherhood. But if such peoples (yet to grasp the necessity or advantage of integration within the framework of a giant socialist state) are pressurized or forced to unite, it is bound to distort the historical process, sow the seeds of a feeling of oppression and injustice, a feeling of irrepressible grievance in the minds of the peoples so pressurized or forced, and mar the possibility of development of a true communist brotherhood or fraternity. It is precisely for this reason that Lenin tried his best with a failing health to resist the 'autonomisation' plan set forth by Stalin, and became very much agitated when he learnt that the dissent against forced unification was silenced with physical assault ('biomechanics') by Ordzhonikidze then engaged in the execution of this plan. Lenin's apprehension was that such use of force would not only have adverse effect on the inter-nationalities relations within the Soviet state but also.

create distrust among the hundreds of millions of peoples in Asia and other parts of the world who were expected to follow the Russians on to the stage of history in the near future.

Besides, Lenin used the base-superstructure analysis in delineating the organization of the political apparatus of the state in socialist society that would unite most democratically the various national groups or communities, giving them among other freedoms the complete right of self-determination, and thereby serve the requirements of its economic foundation. By such an analysis he indicated quite clearly that the revolutionary changes in the economic structure would not make politics adapt itself to the same 'immediately or smoothly ... simply, directly', that similar changes in the political superstructure as well were necessary, for the structure and superstructure are not separate, and simultaneous intervention in both is essential and indispensable. Thus, the non-dialectical economist-determinist approach of his opponents to the national question was discarded by Lenin.

From the point of view of historical materialism he saw nationalism as a contradictory phenomenon, and also emphasized the different contradictory uses of similar or derivative category. While Lenin accepted and even fought for the right of nations to self-determination including secession, he mercilessly exposed the deceptive character of the bourgeois concept of 'national culture' which this class used to aggravate divisions within or check the tendency towards unity and solidarity among the working men of different nationalities. In the process the bourgeoisie tended to employ all the means at its disposal to suppress the latter's cultures, traditions, memories, etc., replace the same by its own and designate them (its temporal matrices) as 'national'. Lenin refused to consider 'national culture' to be neutral or devoid of class content. For him the term 'nation' or 'national' could only be constituted properly on the basis of an acute class analysis, and support for any national movement would be contingent primarily upon a concrete investigation of the issues and classes (their degree of their differentiations being taken into account) involved.

As an advocate of the above approach to all social and political problems Lenin always viewed the national question in its spatial-

temporal context. The period of the rise of capitalism over feudalism was linked with the rise and spread of mass national movements which drew, apart from other non-ruling classes, the peasantry, the most numerous and potentially revolutionary section of the population, into politics. It was at the time of the emergence of the bourgeois democratic society and state in West European countries that nationalism played a progressive role there. But with the cessation of mass democratic movements and the sharpening of class differentiation, especially the antagonism between labour and capital, this ideology lost this character. As for the countries of eastern Europe and those of Asia which had not passed through this stage of development till the beginning of the twentieth century, Lenin considered the national movements developing there to be progressive and, for that matter, insisted on the inclusion of the right of self determination in the programme of social-democratic parties, particularly, in Russia, which was opposed by Rosa Luxemburg and her followers.

This right of self-determination would serve the interests of the national minorities, the micro-communities inhabiting different parts of Russia as well as the interests of the proletariat of the entire state : the demand for the right of option to secede or unite might win the confidence of the oppressed nationalities which, in turn, would bring such nationalities closer to the proletariat of the Great Russia in their struggle for the overthrow of tsarism and the victory of socialist revolution. Thus Lenin's analysis integrated the interest of the part with that of the whole. The same part-whole analysis, as fits into the multi-nationality Russian set-up, applies also to the international situation. In the era of imperialism the proletariat of the oppressed nation must demand the right of self-determination, while the proletariat of the oppressor or imperialist nation would support such demand, and both should express solidarity with each other. Such a solution would serve the interests of both the parts (i.e. the proletariat of the countries in question) and the whole (i.e. the world proletariat). For the movement for secession in the oppressed countries would culminate in deep-going internal democratic changes on the one hand, and the severance of the ties of exploitation by the seceding nations would help weaken the hegemony, ideological or otherwise, of the dominant classes in the oppressor or

imperialist countries and thereby facilitate the revolutionary process there as well as in the world as a whole.

The interests of the part and the whole, thus interpreted, are complementary ; one serves the other. But in his defence of Marx and Engels' attitude towards the national movements of their time (against the criticisms of Rosa Luxemburg and her followers including some 'Left Bolsheviks') Lenin took a formalistic view of this relationship, and asserted the absolute predominance of the whole over the parts : in case the part contradicts the whole, the part must be rejected. As he argued, Marx and Engels, with the inception of bourgeois-democratic revolutions in Europe around 1848, correctly rated the interests of the liberation of a number of large nations passing through this process of transformation higher than those of the movement for liberation of small nations opposed to the process. They made this distinction from a global revolutionary perspective. Thus Lenin tried to explain away what the 'Roozlokomovists', for example, called 'contradictions' in the positions taken by Marx and Engels.

Lenin justified them in terms of the 'concrete situation' of the time. It was argued that in 1848 and the following years until 1890 there were historical and political reasons for distinguishing 'reactionary' and 'revolutionary' nations. Without using the label 'non-historic nations' Lenin approved Engels' rejection of the claim of the small Slavic nationalities to independence on the ground that they served as the outposts of tsarist reaction in central and eastern Europe. On the basis of such an assessment (similar to that of his predecessors) of the situation given at the time, Lenin defended the argument that the historic right of the 'great cultural nations' to pursue their revolutionary development was far more important than the struggle of the 'small, crippled and impotent nations' for separate existence. He could adduce nothing more to this explanation in the absence of a concrete analysis of the specificities of the historical contradictions and class struggles (and their manifestations) in the specific situations in different parts of central and eastern Europe, and virtually left unanswered the crucial question : whether Marx and Engels were correct even in the concrete situation of the nineteenth century itself or, more precisely, whether it was then necessary at all,

in the interest of resolving the principal contradiction (i.e. defeating tsarism and ensuring the victory of democratic revolution in Europe) to deny the small Slavic peoples' historical future, particularly their right to separate national existence. Lenin, however, was cautious enough to add that this discrimination between large and small nations, though valid for the nineteenth century, ceased to be so in the twentieth, because the 'concrete situation' had changed by the time.

As said earlier, Marx and Engels chose (from the totality of contradictions existing within a spatial-temporal framework) one particular contradiction, considering it to be more important from the standpoint of revolutionary historical process, the process of democratic revolution in Europe. But Lenin viewed an altogether different contradiction, namely, the contradiction between handful of imperialist big powers and a large number of oppressed peoples, as more revolutionary in potential, in the context of the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. As the epochs were different, so were the principal contradictions. Such epochs come and go with the origination and resolution of these contradictions (not with a single conflict, but with a series of conflicts, class struggles). The national revolts are not always conflicts of intermediate type bringing about only marginal changes but may assume especially in the colonies the character of principal types (which involve two fundamental tasks, the national liberation and the democratic revolution, that are once distinct and united) effecting changes of far-reaching revolutionary significance.

Though Lenin emphasized all through the possibility and utility of national liberation movements in the colonies it was his belief up to a time that the revolutionary movements of all kinds were 'more practicable, more stubborn, more conscious and more difficult to defeat in Europe than in the colonies'. He might have thought at the time that such movements in the colonies were not so 'stubborn' and the people there were not so 'conscious'. In fact, a blow delivered by the Irish rebellion against English imperialism was expected to be more significant than a blow of equal force delivered in the colonies of Asia or elsewhere. As already mentioned, it was believed by many that a fissure in the granite centre of imperialism

would be far more fatal than the severance of one or two roots at the periphery. But however desirable such a course of events might have been, Lenin came to understand in the course of time that such events were not going to take place or even if did, they were not likely to have as much revolutionary potency or impact as he would have expected, because among other things imperialism, as he himself pointed out in his work on the theme, had deeply contaminated the workers' movement in metropolitan countries through its economic, political and ideological mechanisms, so that their leaders and also a sizeable section of them shared the 'principles' on which the structure of imperialism rested. If Lenin were to hold fast to the 'theory of productive forces' which placed its main emphasis on the development of such forces, it would have been impossible for him to explain why a socialist revolution could take place in a 'backward' country like Russia instead of an 'advanced' industrialized country. In fact, his most outstanding contribution to revolutionary Marxism lies in his teaching to strike at the 'weakest link in the imperialist chain'. He indicated quite clearly that 'breaks' in the imperialist chain could occur at such links as 'backward' countries or colonies, depending on the concrete conditions, historical contradictions and class struggle, in each of them. It is this analysis which envisaged the future chain of upheavals in eastern Europe and Asia and the enormous possibility of such upheavals in Africa and Latin America. This perhaps removes largely the confusions regarding Lenin's position on the prospects of revolutionary movements in 'backward' nations and colonies.

## V

Lenin's views concerning the right of national self-determination developed in the context of the struggles of the oppressed minorities forced to live under tsarist domination for long. Lenin was the first among Russian social-democrats to grasp the revolutionary potential of the grievances of these oppressed nationalities and stress the need for harnessing the same to the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy.<sup>\*\*</sup> But these concrete suggestions in regard to the strategy and tactics of liberation struggles in the colonies and dependencies came in the wake of the upsurge of national movements in Asia and a lull in the revolutionary situation in Europe. As is known, in the years immediately following the October revolution, the question of proletarian

victory in the neighbouring European countries assumed an immense and paramount importance for most of the Bolshevik leaders bent upon preserving, in the face of the civil war and the threatening capitalist encirclement, what the revolution had won for the country. For them it was such neighbouring countries (whence the danger of intervention was coming) which, once turned socialist, could be the real and effective friend of Soviet Russia in any eventuality. Naturally, when the first congress of the Comintern was convened amidst the threat of foreign intervention and the civil war, the emphasis was placed by these leaders on the need for drawing up a programme for the international communist movement that would provide theoretical guidance and ensure practical material help for the social revolution especially in those countries of Europe where proletarian struggles were gaining fresh strength. Trotsky, in keeping with the initial expectations of the founders of Marxism, expressed the view in the 'Manifesto' (written and produced by himself) of the first Comintern congress that the proletarian revolution in major European countries, once attained its victory, would bring about the emancipation of the peoples in colonies and dependencies. It was such a vague and meaningless rhetoric about the victory of socialist revolution in the 'advanced' countries as the necessary precondition of the liberation of the 'backward' peoples that not Trotsky alone but many a Bolshevik leader considered to be a solution pregnant with tremendous potentiality.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps, underlying this proposition were such general assumptions as the high level of the productive forces, the presence of strong socialist organisations, the development of revolutionary movements, the growth of revolutionary political consciousness among a rapidly increasing number of industrial workers in 'advanced' European countries and, more particularly, the revolutionary fermentation in Germany, on the one hand, and the incomparably low level of the productive forces, the numerical weakness of the industrial proletariat, the absence of a determined conscious leadership coupled with weak political organisations, the highly repressive alien administration etc., in the 'backward' colonies on the other hand. All this testifies to the persistence of a 'theory of productive forces', lack of concrete analysis of the specific historical contradictions and the class struggles, belief in the theory of the 'strongest link in the imperialist chain' and attendant

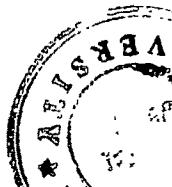
ideological (especially eurocentric) biases (which percolated, to an extent, from the Marxism of the Second International to the Bolshevik problematic) in the proposition under discussion. The victory of revolutions in Europe on which this analysis was predicated was not to come ; the high hope pinned on its imminence was belied soon by the events like the smashing of Bela Kun's red regime in Hungary, the suppression of the Spartacus movement in Germany and the brutal murder of its leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and subsequently, by other defeats and failures.

To be sure, Lenin's awareness of the revolutionary potential of 'backward Asia' was not the product of any disappointment with 'advanced Europe' consequent upon the failure of its revolutions. It came much earlier when he was still hopeful of a quick victory in Europe. With this awareness he was to make a definite break with the Second International dogma that the emancipation of the colonial peoples (viewed as the *passive objects* of history) would be possible only in the wake of the victory of the European movement, and treat these peoples as an effective ally of the international proletariat. Still, the fact remains that he did not advance his concrete theses concerning the problems of national liberation in the colonies before the second congress of the Comintern (17 July—7 August 1920).

Lenin, in making his deliberations in the Congress, especially as the chairman of the colonial commission constituted for the occasion, paid considerable attention to the problems facing the colonial countries of the East without, of course, neglecting the cause of social revolution in the west or counterposing one to the other. As supporter of democracy within the Comintern and of international communist fraternity among the revolutionaries of different countries, he invited comments and suggestions from the delegates to the congress on his preliminary theses on the national and colonial question. It was through a non-regimented discussion that he corrected himself in some respects on the basis of the views of M. N. Roy, the Indian delegate, and corrected the latter in some other respects. It is the Lenin-Roy formulation evolved at the congress that made an attempt at differentiation between the two major sections of the colonial bourgeoisie — one called 'national-revolu-

tionary' and the other pro-imperialist, reactionary bourgeoisie — and suggested the usefulness of the working masses' *temporary* (i.e. for the democratic and anti-imperialist stage of the struggle) and *conditional* (i.e. without losing under any circumstances the organisational and ideological independence of their movement, even if that movement was still in its most embryonic form) alliance with the former. It is this formulation which was further elaborated subsequently by the Comintern under Lenin's leadership and still later by Mao Tsetung in the Chinese context. A correct understanding of this Marxist-Leninist conception of anti-imperialist united front demands a concrete assessment of the character/tendencies (*vis-à-vis* imperialism and its allies) of the different sections of the colonial bourgeoisie and other classes and of the complex and changing relationship between them in specific situations. It admits of neither a sectarian, *workerist* attitude towards the national bourgeoisie and other sections of the people with revolutionary tendencies (an attitude which is often elevated to the status of an absolute principle) nor a collaborationist attitude towards the whole of the colonial bourgeoisie and other classes or fractions thereof, with reactionary tendencies (i.e. in Mao's words, a policy of unity not through struggle but through yielding).

It is again in the course of his deliberations in the congress that Lenin elucidated the revolutionary role of the peasantry in colonial and backward countries (i.e. countries dominated by pre-capitalist socio-economic forms) in general and stressed the need to adapt the communist theory and organizations (especially their membership) to the precapitalist conditions in particular, conditions in which the toiling and exploited peasants constituted the bulk of the population and where the immediate task was to wage a struggle against the pre-capitalist relations of production and not the capitalist ones. With reference to the colonies which formerly belonged to the tsarist empire and such backward nations as Turkestan which were liberating themselves at that time and among which the Russians were doing some important work, Lenin proclaimed that the capitalist stage of development was not inevitable for these peoples if the victorious proletariat conducted vigorous propaganda among them and the Soviet government came to their aid with all means at its command. Besides, in view of the reactionary character of the inter-



national capitalist system that retarded or resisted its own development in the backward countries generally, Lenin envisaged the possibility of skipping over the capitalist stage of development by these countries with the aid of the proletariat of the 'advanced' nations. As for the 'advanced' colonies like India and China it was laid down in the amended text of Roy's supplementary theses that the proletarian parties in these countries must propagate, vigorously and systematically, the Soviet idea and organise, as soon as possible, the *peasants' and workers' soviets* (not merely *peasants' soviets* as in the other countries where there was no substantial number of industrial workers and where, in a sense, no such proletarian organisation or movement could arise) which could work in co-operation with the Soviet republics of the advanced capitalist countries for the overthrow of the exploitative order not only in their own country but throughout the world.

Lenin's break with the Second International's crude evolutionist 'stages theory' is perhaps clear by now. But his assertion that countries where capitalist relations were not yet dominant could pass over to the socialist stage of development with assistance from advanced socialist countries is open to misinterpretation.<sup>24</sup> As Mao said in another context, this is an unprecise and incomplete way of putting the matter. The countries in question could take the socialist road, on accomplishing the task of democratic revolution, only through a protracted and tortuous struggle for the transformation of all retrograde relations of production. The internal factors are fundamental while the external ones are supplemental.<sup>24</sup> The assistance from successful socialist countries may be an important factor, but that could not be the one to determine whether or not such countries take this road. True, it could influence the rate of their advance, but when and under what conditions? Only after they have taken the road through internal struggles to transform the social relations of production. In other words, external conditions could produce effects through the mediation of practice, by acting upon the contradictions internal to such practice in each of these countries.

To be precise, the national-colonial theses of the second Comintern congress, both Lenin's and Roy's together in their amended form, provided for the first time, some broad theoretical guidelines

for the liberation movement in colonial and dependent countries in general. The theses (taken separately) indicated, at least in certain respects, the strategy to be pursued by such movement in different countries (depending on the specific conditions existing in each of them), and also hinted at the prospect of their independent social development in future. Some critics argue that it is the 'duplicity' and 'vagueness' of theses or the mistakes consequent upon reinterpretation/reformulation by the dominant Comintern leadership in the post-Lenin era or simply their unquestioned acceptance by the communist parties in the countries in question, which alone can be said to have stunted the growth of liberation struggle or caused its frequent 'leftward' or 'right-ward' drift and failure. As we understand, the explanation is not so simple. For to locate the real causes of the failures of such struggle one has rather to look for the internal factors which in the main were responsible for the weaknesses of the movement and its leadership or, more narrowly, the predominance of opportunistic tendencies in them, than to shift the whole burden of responsibility to the shoulders of Stalin and the Bolshevik party or to lay it at the doors of the Comintern. An investigation of these factors (and not the latter means) can serve the explanatory purpose to a large extent. Admittedly, shifts in the Bolshevik policy produced immediate effect on the Comintern in the sense that the latter defined, as a rule, its political line under the guidance of the former. But the changes in the Bolshevik and the Comintern line, as Bettelheim (1978 : II, 20, 535-6) pointed out in his analyses of the class struggles in Soviet Russia, could play a role effectively at the international plane only to the extent they corresponded at bottom to the types of relations the Comintern's constituent parties maintained with the realities of their own countries, and to the practices they were engaged in or committed to. So the reason for a particular party's being influenced by the mistaken theses advanced by the Bolshevik party and the Comintern should be sought primarily in the relations of this party with the various classes of society, in its social practice, in its internal structure and in its capacity to learn from its own experiences by means of criticism and self-criticism. Besides, there remains the problem of analysing the constraints 'inherent' in the popular movements themselves in specific conditions of colonial and 'backward' countries, for example, the traditional divisions, ethnic,

religious, or otherwise, in a heterogeneous milieu as blocks in the way of consolidation of popular masses as cohesive units, diverse and contradictory forms of their consciousness, the varying and complex interrelationships between these elements, and the like.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Poulantzas argues : 'Given its roots in material matrices, the modern nation can be transcended only through radical subversion of the relations of production and social division of labour that gave rise to these matrices.' This, he asserts, helps one to explain the state of the national question in the 'socialist' east. 'The prodigious forms of national *oppression* that mark both relations among these countries (the USSR and the people's democracies) and such of these countries separately (oppression of national minorities) cannot but refer us back in a...fundamental sense to the "capitalist aspects" of their relations of production, of their social division of labour, and of their states themselves.' Poulantzas 1978 : 120.
- 2 To speak of the 'fatherland' or the 'nation' as such is to subscribe to an unreconstructed Hegelian notion of the same. The nation does have a class nature, and it could not mean the same thing for the working class and popular masses and for the bourgeoisie as well.
- 3 In Poulantzas' words : 'To set the national state as the prize and objective of workers' struggle involves the reappropriation by the working class of its own history. To be sure, this cannot be achieved without a transformation of the state ; but it also points to a certain permanency of the state, in its national aspect, during the transition to socialism—permanency not just in the sense of a regrettable survival, but also in that of a positive necessity for the transition to socialism.' ibid : 119.
- 4 Poulantzas puts it thus : 'Although the existence and diverse practices of the working class already presage the historical

supersession of the modern nation, they cannot under capitalism take shape except as workers' variant of that nation. The spatiality and historicity of each working class are a variant of its own nation, both because they are caught in the spatial and temporal matrices and because they form an integral part of that nation understood as a result of the relationship of forces between working class and bourgeoisie'. More simply, 'the struggle of the working class does not unfold in an airtight chamber, but exist only as a term of the relationship [just mentioned]'. *ibid* : 118, 116.

- 5 For evaluation of Engels' position in this regard see Rodziejowsky 1978 : 208, 209 ; Lowy 1977 ; 139 ; Schlesinger 1951 : 302 ff, 334, 341 ff.
- 6 In contrast, Engels spoke highly of the 'progressive nations', their abominable role, specifically that of the Südetan-Germans in relation to the Czechs, the Magyars in relation to the Croats, of the Poles in relation to the Ukrainians, Lithuanians etc. notwithstanding.
- 7 Though Marx and Engels never developed a systematic theory on the national question (nor they ever intended to do so), certain common ideas do emerge from their fragmentary statements relating to specific cases, which definitely contributed to the formulation of the later Marxist (Leninist) policy. First, 'a nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations' or, more precisely, 'any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains'. This implies that the oppression of another nation strengthens the domination, ideological or otherwise, of the ruling classes over the ruled in the oppressor nation. This point was made in the context of the Irish question in the sixties and after. But even before (ever since 1848-49), in relation to the Polish case, Marx and Engels said numerous times that the oppression of the Poles had tied the Germans and Russians closely to the cause of counter-revolution. Second, the national question is linked up with the social question : the guarantee of success for a national liberation movement lies in its combination with the struggle for radical internal

democratic changes. Engels, especially in his discussion on the Frankfurt Assembly debate (August-September 1848), stressed that Poland and all its neighbouring agricultural peoples could free themselves from patriarchal feudal absolutism only by an agrarian revolution. This, in his opinion, would be the social content of their national liberation. Besides, in the writings concerning the Italian war against the Austrian army he made some observations on the specific features of national liberation wars and conditions required for winning them. It was emphasized that a nation waging a war of liberation could not confine itself to the ordinary methods of warfare. A small nation could overcome a large one only by transforming its liberation war into a real revolutionary war (organizing mass peasant uprisings deep inside the areas occupied by the enemy forces), into a people's war of mobile guerilla detachments instead of a conventional war of regular armies alone.

- 8 This relationship between liberation struggles in the colonies and anti-capitalist movements in the metropolises was to become more mature and profound by the turn of the century, and Lenin was to theorize on it from that vantage point.
- 9 On this point refer to an illuminating study by Shanin, 1983.
- 10 This might be partly due to the tensions internal to Marx's own work. Admittedly, there are certain formulations in Marx (particularly in his 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*) which seem to suggest a similar problematic of productive forces, and these formulations, interpreted economically, played a part in the ideology of the Second International. But the 'dominant' view in his work as a whole (read differently, taking into consideration its internal discrepancies) is the one which sees as the driving force of history of the movement of internal contradictions and the class struggles and not the development of the productive forces. Significantly, in his letter to the editor of *Otechestvennye Zapiski*, 1878, Marx explicitly repudiated any attempt to metamorphose his analyses of the genesis of

capitalism in Western Europe into a 'historico-philosophical theory' ('of which the supreme virtue consists in its being supra-historical') of the general path of development imposed by fate on all peoples regardless of their different historical circumstances. Again, in his correspondence with Vera Zasulich, early 1881, he repeated this point, dismissing the idea of such a *general* theory prescribing to every people the necessity of passing through a succession of the same modes of production in accordance with the level of development of the productive forces.

- 11 For details see Callinicos 1983 : 63-4 ; Gerratana 1973 and Timpanaro 1980, *passim*.
- 12 In explaining the problem of the domination of bourgeois reformism over the workers' movement in England E. P. Thompson hammers the point : the bourgeois ideology 'is strong because, within very serious limits, it has worked', both cognitively and in practice. It provided intelligibility and had concrete embodiments in effective working-class organisations. While thus arguing against some of the abstractions of Perry Anderson's analysis of the 'Peculiarities of the English', Thompson located the absence in England of a socialist political and theoretical counterblast to the spontaneous bourgeois unionism (this was diagnosed by Engels as the main peculiarity) in the history of the labour movement's success. In addition he says : 'An interpretation of British labourism which attributes all to Fabianism and intellectual default is as valueless as an account of Russia between 1924 and 1953 which attributes all to the vices of Marxism, or of Stalin himself. And one thing which it lacks is any socio-political dimension.' Thompson 1979 ; 71, 74, 69 ; also Mepham 1979 : III, 166.
- 13 Cf. Das 1979 and the references therein.
- 14 Rosa Luxemburg and her followers who clearly belonged to the revolutionary left-wing of the international socialist movement adopted on this question a stand somewhat analogous to that of the Austro-Marxists. They were particularly opposed to the demand for Polish Independence from

Russia. But these 'formally' similar positions should not blind one to the crucially different attitudes of the reformists and the revolutionaries to the issues like that of the class nature of the state. In the case of the former 'the motivation for seeking to avoid the secession of the oppressed nation was clearly not the result of...an ['economist'] weakness alone [as in the case of Rosa Luxemburg] but of a deep-going identification with the existing state, of incipient reformism'. Minnerup 1978 : I, 21-2.

- 15 For details see Braunthal 1966 : 306 ff; Cole and Postgate 1946 : 424 ff; Davis 1967 : 93 ff, 107 ff.
- 16 This feeling was conveyed to Bernstein by Ignaz Auer, SPD Secretary in his famous letter : 'My dear Ede, one does not formally make a decision to do the things you suggest, one doesn't say such things, one simply *does* them.'
- 17 The proceedings of its two most important Congresses in this context are excerpted in the texts in d'Encausse and Schram 1969 : 125 ff.
- 18 Curiously, they frequently cited the observations of eminent socialists, including Lassalle and even the founders of Marxism (interpreting them on a reading advantageous to their purpose) to provide theoretical rationalisations for their collaborationist drift in this regard. For example, in order to establish his case for a certain tutelage of the 'civilized' peoples over the 'uncivilized' ones supposedly in the interest of humanity Bernstein invoked Marx's authority ('The earth does not belong to a single people but to humanity, and each people should manage it to the advantage of humanity') or to prove the impossibility of any direct passage from 'barbarism' to socialism except through capitalism. David resorted to the same procedure.
- 19 The reference here is to a line in Schiller's *Maria Stuart* ('What it is, it should dare to appear') which Bernstein unwittingly adopted as his motto in urging the SPD to dare appear as a petty-bourgeois social-democratic reform party.

- 20 Here Lenin's argument was in tune with Marx's, especially its simplifying revolutionary sweep and elan in the *Communist Manifesto*. This is not to say that he was completely unaware of the limitations inherent in the very mechanisms of the capitalist system, limitations which these internationalist tendencies encounter such as the persistence of nation-states as the focal point of the reproduction of the conditions of existence for the bourgeoisie in relation to other classes and social forces, as the primary sites of their conflict ; the gap or polarisation, in respect of the development of the world's productive forces, between the 'rich' (dominant) and the 'poor' (dominated) countries ; the 'blocking' of the productive forces especially in the dominated ones and the unevenness of such development, etc., on the one hand, and the divisions, national or otherwise, in the world's toiling people's movement, on the other. Still, it must be admitted, due emphasis on these counter-tendencies was not placed in his formulations on the theme under discussion.
- 21 Lenin understood very well that the centralising tendency under capitalism was fostered among other things by the economic and political apparatuses of the state formed in its monopoly stage, and it was not the same kind of centralization that the socialist revolution should reinforce by means of the same invariant state apparatuses. Still, one finds in his work tensions between the class analysis he made of the bourgeois political apparatus and the value he sometimes attached to the economic apparatus of state capitalism, between his relational, 'smash' view of the former or of the state as a whole and an implicit 'machine' view or 'capture' practice especially in regard to the latter.
- 22 Undoubtedly, this utility of national strivings in Russia was crucial to Lenin's recognition of the right of all oppressed peoples to self-determination. But this is not to say that the question of the abolition of Great-Russian oppression was of no importance to him or of secondary importance in the sense of its being dependent upon the abolition of social oppression in general. Ever since the summer of 1913

he advocated most consistently the right of national self-determination including secession not merely to meet the 'exigencies' of the situation or as a 'tactical weapon' for the Russian revolution but, above all, as a concrete solution of the nationalities problem in the country. In fact, even after the 'exigencies' or 'tactical requirements' were over, Lenin does not throw this right to the wind. On the contrary he defended it almost single-handedly against the slogan of 'self-determination for the working masses' advanced by many of his colleagues (including Stalin) soon after the October Revolution. Lenin learnt from his experience (especially while in power) that the oppressed nationalities were not as sensitive to any other matter as in regard to their equality and the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades, from the dominant nation. For this reason he insisted seriously that Russian communists must exercise profound discretion in their handling of relations with the non-Russian nationalities and show utmost consideration to their sentiments which were the result of age-old oppression and persecution. Not only that, Lenin even urged his Russian comrades to accept an inequality unfavourable to themselves or their people in order to compensate the one that existed so long to the detriment of these nationalities. To him Great-Russian chauvinism was the main evil to be fought by the communists of the Russian nation itself. It was this principle of proletarian internationalism to which Lenin attached primary importance in counterposing his policy to Stalin's administrative centralism on the Georgian question.

- 23 Lenin is not known to have declined at the time to endorse the 'Manifesto'.
- 24 For example, some present-day Soviet ideologies, including their Indian apologists, conveniently infer from the thesis under reference (contrary to Lenin's intentions) that the people of all backward colonial countries would take the 'non-capitalist path' towards socialism, after winning independence, in alliance with the 'forces of victorious socialism',

that, by implication, they would take this so-called non-capitalist path by imposing some state enterprises established with 'socialist' aid and such other 'socialist milestones' on the non-transformed relations of production, by embracing 'socialist' ideology or joining the 'socialist camp' and thereby acquiring a certificate necessary for transition via this path towards socialism.

25 This is not to say that they are separate or are never found in dialectical unity.

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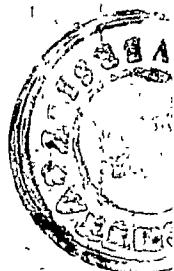
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